

THE  
MODERN  
FINE GENTLEMAN,  
A NOVEL,  
In TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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L O N D O N:

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THE MODERN  
FINE GENTLEMAN.

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LETTER I.

Sir WILLIAM MELVIN to  
JOHN CROFTS, Esq;

SIR, Melvin Abbey, June 4.

**Y**OUR very particular inquiries about my ward, Miss Melmoth, give me reason to believe, from the manner in which you made them, that something stronger than mere curiosity excited you to ask those questions in regard to her birth, &c. which I shall answer with all imaginable pleasure.

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B

But

But I first beg leave to inform you, that though I am her guardian, I shall never take upon me to bias or controul her inclinations, in an affair which must determine the happiness or misery of her life. I have, indeed, a high opinion of your merit; time may render the young lady equally sensible of it. You, Sir, was struck at first sight; nor can I wonder: for, if one may judge from appearances, she has every gentle and engaging quality which can adorn the sex. I hope, however, she will not too hastily dispose of her heart: from the character I have heard of her, I think she will not. Her residence at my house has been so short, that, at present, I can only judge of her by what others report: a week's acquaintance, however, has convinced me, that she has a solidity, a discretion, which one seldom meets with in girls of her age; for she is now, I think, but barely entered into her nineteenth year.

Excuse

## FINE-GENTLEMAN. 3

Excuse me, Sir, I too long delay the requested particulars of her family and fortune. Permit me to relate a little adventure, which first introduced me to the knowledge of her worthy father. I had finished what is called the grand tour, and was on my return to England, when, crossing a forest about twenty miles on this side of Paris, attended by two servants, I heard the report of pistols, which seemed to issue from behind a thick grove of trees, on one side of the main road. I instantly clapped spurs to my horse, ordering my domesticks to follow. The wood was almost impenetrable, or, perhaps, we had not discovered the right path. After advancing, with great difficulty, for about a quarter of a mile, we came to a pretty large opening, where the first objects that met my eyes were two servants stretched at their length, and, to all appearance, lifeless. A little farther, tied to a tree,

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stripped

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stripped of most of his cloaths, was a middle-aged, well-looking man, who, by his air, and that part of his dress which the robbers had left him, I judged to be their master. All this was sufficiently shocking; but still more deeply was I affected, when I beheld, as I still continued to advance, a lady with hair dishevelled, and garments all torn and disordered, running towards me, holding in her trembling arms a child of about two years old, exclaiming, "Save me, save me! O my child, my child!" Instantly three of the villains appeared in pursuit of her. Never can I be sufficiently grateful to heaven for deigning to make me the happy instrument of their deliverance. After an obstinate combat, in which Mr. Melmoth, now being restored to liberty, assisted, the robbers were put to flight. We found his equipage at some distance, into which we first put his only surviving servant,



servant, who was very dangerously wounded. The lady's maid was next sought for, and found, in a swoon, at the foot of a tree, to which the wretches had bound one of her arms in such a manner, that it was almost broken. To be short, I accompanied them to Calais, from whence they proposed to embark with me for England. Here Mrs. Melmoth was seized with a dangerous fever, partly the consequence of her fright, partly the remains of an indisposition, for which she had been ordered by her physicians to the south of France, where they had for a twelvemonth past resided, without having received much benefit from the prescription.

I felt myself so strongly attached to this little, amiable family, that I could not leave them, but chose to wait for (what, alas, never happened) Mrs. Melmoth's recovery. She died a fortnight

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after

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after the commencement of her illness, leaving her husband the most afflicted and disconsolate of men. She had, with her last breath, recommended her beloved Mariana, not only to his care, but to mine. After her funeral, we returned to England: Mr. Melmoth continued to honour me with his warmest friendship: the child was sent into the country, and placed under the care of his sister, a worthy woman, who had disobliged her family by marrying beneath her birth: her father never was reconciled, nor ever would give her a farthing. My friend, however, had, when he came to his estate, after the death of that obdurate parent, acted nobly by her; and, by bestowing a considerable living on her husband, who is a clergyman, rendered their circumstances perfectly easy. Mr. Melmoth continued single near thirteen years: better for him had he ever continued so; but there is a fate in these

## FINE-GENTLEMAN. 7

these affairs. Chance brought him into company with lady Jones, a widow of forty-five, a woman of very moderate understanding, infinitely vain, coquettish and extravagant; in short, the very reverse of his first most amiable and long-lamented Emilia. This lady, such as I have described her, had the art to draw my sensible friend into her snare; in an evil hour he made her his wife. She brought home with her a daughter by her first marriage, on whom she lavished all her fondness: indeed, I am told she is a most deserving young lady. Mariana was suffered to continue in the country: Mr. Melmoth regretted her absence; but he owned to me, in confidence, that, for the sake of peace, he was compelled to give up the point. Vexation and regret for his second imprudent marriage shortened his life. 'Tis now near six months since he died; after having appointed me one of his

B 4 daughter's

daughter's guardians, and making it his last request, that she might live with me under the protection of my sister. As he was possessed of a very considerable fortune, I made no doubt but that he would leave the principal part of it to her. What then was my surprize, on his will being opened, to find that he had bequeathed to her only the five thousand pounds which he had received with her mother. I own, that I cannot help suspecting some foul play in the affair; time, perhaps, will bring it to light. Mariana has a sufficiency; the man who is worthy of her, will, I am sure, be of my opinion.

So much for her fortune and connexions. You also made some enquiry about her birth. Her father, who was a younger brother, had been in business: no disparagement this, I should think, since to trade and commerce we owe the flourishing



flourishing state of our happy isle. Mr. Melmoth did not pique himself on imaginary distinctions; but, if he had chose to boast, no one could produce a more ancient or illustrious pedigree. My ward's relations are all in the higher sphere of life, excepting her worthy aunt, and her family, whom, however, she prefers to all the rest. Nothing but the last commands of a respected father could have induced her to leave them, and their sweet retreat, though certainly it would have been a pity to suffer so many charms to be buried in obscurity. Mariana, if I mistake not, is formed to make a distinguished figure in life. May she, however, wisely prefer the substance of happiness to the shadow; and not, like too many of her sex, be misled by unsatisfying ambition.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

## L E T T E R II.

Miss NANCY PEMBROKE to  
Miss MELMOTH.

Sudley Farm.

**N**EVER were a set of people so unhinged as we all are since the departure of my Mariana. I have, for my part, tried every room in the house, have spoke to every one of the family, in hopes of diverting my melancholy, and regaining some degree of my former chearful compofure; but in vain. I can fettle no where; no one attends to me, nor do I indeed know what I fay. Well then, the best thing I can do is to continue at my pen. What fhall I fay to my Melmoth, dear and amiable companion of my youth, friend of my heart? how exprefs the feelings of that heart,

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heart, under the first severe affliction it ever experienced, this separation from thee? I call it my first severe affliction, though I have lost my parents; but, when that sad event happened, I was too young to feel its force; and, since that time, the best of uncles, and the maternal fondness of an equally affectionate aunt, have supplied their place. But who shall supply the place of my Mariana? Dear, and most amiable of friends, do not forget me; let not the gaiety, the tumultuous pleasures in which you will now engage, drive from your memory the innocent, the chearful amusements of Sudley Farm; nor let the rich and great, with whom you will now associate, tempt you to despise its humble inhabitants. Far be such meanness from Miss Melmoth, who early imbibed the precepts of wisdom, and was early taught, that virtue, benevolence, and sensibility, were the steps to happiness;  
and

and O how sweetly have you hitherto practised those precepts! You are the model which every prudent girl wishes to copy after; your dress, your air, your every motion, is attempted to be imitated: you need send for no milliners dolls, no description of new fashions from London, said Mr. Manning one day in a large company of ladies; Miss Melmoth has from nature more taste, more true elegance, than all the milliners in Paris. Dress like her, and you will be sure to please. But why do I repeat his praise of you, when you well know that we have not a swain within twenty miles round us, who is not your professed admirer; little monopolizer that you are! and yet so irresistible is your power of pleasing, that, in spite of envy, you are almost as universally a favourite with your own sex as with the other.

The



The Miss Harleys and Miss Ryders called upon us this morning, to enjoy, as usual, one of our reading and working parties : but on this occasion neither books nor embroidery found place ; all our talk, all our attention, was engrossed by you. You cannot think how those worthy girls lamented your departure ; many of your agreeable fallies were recollected and repeated : our morning rambles, when you used to trip along with the light agility of a wood-nymph, while our walk was enlivened by your chearful conversation, were recalled : our tea-visits were not forgot, at which sentiment, harmony, and innocent vivacity, used to preside. We talked over all those rural amusements, to which your presence used to give such charms ; our rustic balls, our chearful harvest-homes, when we assisted my uncle to entertain his labourers : our May-day garlands,

garlands, when Mariana was always chosen queen of the May. O my friend, will you forget all these? Do you smile disdain at the repetition of such insipid joys? Once they pleased; beware lest artificial and expensive pleasures should deprave your taste, and make you lose your relish for nature, and her affecting simplicity.

While we girls were indulging our melancholy, by recalling past scenes, my uncle came from the garden with a fine moss rose in his hand: he looked round: Alas! said he with a sigh, my little smiling Melmoth is no longer here to receive my morning present. He laid it carelessly on a table, and threw himself into a chair. Let me see, cried he, 'tis now six days since she left us; her journey would engross two of them; two more she would most likely pass with her mother-in-law; and as  
that

that mother is one of your fine ladies, and lives in a constant crowd, she would hardly have time to write while with her. Then it would take a day and a half more ere she reached her guardian's: the other half-day we must allow for the ceremony and fiddle faddle of introduction, &c. But if she writes not to-morrow, if we hear not from her by the next post, she is not, I can tell her, the girl I thought her. I have no doubt of her writing, said my aunt; nor I, cried your friend Nancy; she promised to dedicate two hours at least of the day to her pen, in which she was to write a journal of all that happened to her, a minute description of every incident, every new acquaintance, &c. Such was the united request of all us girls of Sudley Farm, and of all those female friends in the neighbourhood whom she honoured with her esteem, in the cedar parlour; there once a week we are to meet, and to be amused,

amused, as well as improved, by the perusal of her epistles.

So spoke your Nancy Pembroke, answering for the fulfilment of your engagement, having never yet known you to violate a promise. And now, farewell, my best beloved: that heaven may guide, govern, and protect you, is the prayer of your affectionate

N. PEMBROKE.

L E T-



## L E T T E R III.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

**M**AY health, contentment, and innocence, ever continue to make their abode under the hospitable roof of Sudley-house. How are its dear and respected inhabitants? my kind, facetious uncle; my mild, my maternal and beloved aunt; my sweet, smiling cousins, Lucy and Olivia; my friend, my chearful, amiable, faucy, little friend, Nancy Pembroke, friends, relations of my heart? With anxious solicitude does your Melmoth enquire after your health and happiness; and with true sincerity assure you all, that neither time nor absence shall ever weaken that tender, grateful affection, which your virtues, and the benefits with which you have loaded

loaded me, have so firmly rooted in my heart. I should fill a quire, were I to give way to its tender effusions; but it would only be a repetition of what you have a thousand times heard, and what, I hope, you will ever do your Mariana too much justice to doubt the truth of. Let me now proceed to fulfil my promise. A pair of scribbling, romantic girls, my uncle used to call his Nancy and me. You will all be of his opinion, when you see what a packet I have wrote since my arrival, though unsettled, and much engrossed by company.

August the 1st. Ashton Place.

**M**Y journey hither could not fail to be melancholy, after having parted with friends so dear to me. Anne and I continued silent for some hours after I had bid, at the Red Lion, a last adieu to my uncle and the obliging Mr. Farneby,

Farneby, who turned his horse, and stood looking back at my chaise till it drove out of sight, as I could see through the hind glass. Worthy man, you may assure him that he possesses my highest esteem, and that the more for his having so generously desisted in his addresses, when he found that esteem was all I could bestow in return for his love. Anne, who was bred and born in our neighbouring village, who had never in her life been ten miles distant from that scene of rural felicity, doubtless felt as much in separating from her humble friends as did her mistress in parting from her's; for the girl has great sensibility, a strong recommendation to me. I let her then, undisturbed, enjoy her silent sorrow, while I, in imagination, returned to Sudley, to re-enjoy those peaceful, happy hours, which used, with so much swiftness, to wing their flight. About twelve o'clock next morning,  
we

we reached Ashley : a thousand tender, melancholy ideas, rushed into my mind at the sight of a place where, six years before, I had received from an affectionate parent so rapturous a welcome ; a parent whom I shall see no more in this life, whose heart had cruelly been estranged from me by my enemies ; a father who, in death, seemed to have forgot his child, nor deigned to bestow on her his parting blessing. Ah ! it was not his fault ; dear and precious shall he ever be to the memory of his Mariana. These melancholy reflections had moistened my eyes with tears ; I felt an uncommon oppression on my spirits ; I dreaded the reception I should meet with from my stepmother, utter strangers to each other, she who had manifested her dislike to me, and I not a little prejudiced against her from report. The gate opened ; all new faces ; none of my father's old, faithful domesticks ; young, well-



well-dressed, faucy-looking fellows, crowded the hall, instead of the venerable, grey-haired porter, the worthy, brave Richard, lame with the wounds received in defending his master; or the prudent and honest butler with his sedate countenance and silver locks, grave in their dress, civil in their behaviour, courteous even to the lowest guest; domesticks too respectable for a modern fine lady. A bustling, pricked-out house-keeper, made her appearance as soon as the servants had announced my arrival: she opened a parlour door. ‘This way, Miss, if you please; my lady is dressing.’ I threw myself into a chair. What a different reception, thought I, from the last I here received! This thought forced a sigh. ‘You seem fatigued, Miss, (resumed the woman) would you chuse a dish of chocolate?’ Before I had time to answer, her lady’s bell rang with violence; away scuttled

Mrs.

Mrs Housekeeper. Anne, who had stood sorrowfully in one corner of the room, now ran to me, and dropping on her knee, pressed my hand to her lips. O, my dear young lady, how cold, how inhospitable are the manners of the people here ! they freeze me, my heart is shut against them. What a different air is diffused over every thing at charming Sudley ! Why flies not the lady of the house to welcome you, the wife of your respected father ? Hush, hush, good girl, (interrupted I) here again comes her ambassadrefs. ‘ My lady, Miss Melmoth, desires you will go up to her dressing-room.’ Anne, on this, cast at me a sorrowful glance, and descended to the lower regions.

Take, my dear friends of Sudley, a description of lady Jones, of her daughter, their attendants, employments, &c. as they struck me on my entrance. Her  
ladyship

ladyship was seated at her toilet, a most elegant one indeed; all its ornaments silver: her hair was just finished; round her neck was hung a thin laced shade, by way of combing cloth: the head was done up in a style that appeared so ridiculous on an old woman, I could hardly keep my countenance; curls on curls, and loads of wool. Lady Jones has been handsome, as I have heard; but, in spite of art, there is not now the least remains of beauty once admired. Time has left not a wreck behind, except in her own imagination; there vanity will make it flourish in eternal youth. Her daughter, a tall, genteel, sprightly looking brunet, of about five and twenty, sat lolling on a couch, a snuff-box and pocket handkerchief on her knee, a book in one hand, the other long, lean, fallow, and bony, hung down at its full length, its fingers extended, as in admiration of what she read.

read. Miss Jones is not handsome, but to me her face is rather agreeable, at least I thought it so when she looked up, and discovered a pair of sparkling black eyes, and still more when she spoke, and shewed a set of white, even teeth. She is, in every respect, the reverse of her mother, particularly in her dress, which is careless almost to a degree of flatterlines; black hair ill combed, cap awry, handkerchief tumbled, one ruffle the back part before, slippers down on the heels. With all these oddities, Miss Jones is an amiable woman, has a warm, susceptible heart, and witty, as she is reckoned. She is still more good-humoured than witty, as I have found on a better acquaintance. She has acquired the character of the learned lady. Reading, indeed, is her chief amusement: she is far gone in the study of poetry and romance, doats on the *Country Lover's Retirement*, and enters, with a degree



degree of enthusiasm, into the joys of female friendship. Her lady mother, on the contrary, would never spend a single day in what she calls odious solitude, were it not the fashion to pass a few of the summer months in the country. She hates reading, laughs at sentiment, is incapable of friendship, and loves only herself.

But to return to my reception. I had advanced some paces in the room, without any one's seeming to have perceived me. 'Well, Sir, (to her hair-dresser, cried lady Jones) do not fail to get me one of those towers; I think, as you say, my hair is rather too flat.' The fellow bowed. My guide ventured, for the second time, to announce me. 'Miss Melmoth, madam.' 'O aye, I protest I had forgot, (cried her ladyship, turning half round in her chair) I am glad to see you Miss; pray be seated; and, Bennet, bring my cap.'

Miss Jones, who had been so deeply engrossed by her studies, that she neither saw nor heard what passed, at that instant raised her eyes from her book. Seeing me, she rose. 'Miss Melmoth !' 'Charlotte, (said lady Jones) don't you think she is very like her father ?' With what cool indifference did she name a husband, whom she had so much reason to love, a husband who enriched her even to the neglecting his only child ! 'She is like an angel, (cried the sprightly girl, running to embrace me) absolutely an angel, repeated she, gazing at me with a smile of complacency ; what havock will make those

' Brilliant eyes that wound at sight,  
' And foil the di'mond's sparkling  
' light !'

' You must permit me to love you, my dear, (added she) nothing to me so attractive as beauty : I have just been reading a description, of which, having  
seen

seen you, I can form a perfect idea.' ' You must not regard what that wild girl says to you, (interrupted lady Jones, adjusting her lappet) she is a wit, and a joker.' While she spoke, we were summoned to dinner. At table, Miss Jones asked me, with an obliging air, a thousand questions about my dear friends at Sudley : she also led me to describe our rural amusements, and manner of living there. She was enchanted at the pleasing, yet unconstrained regularity, with which we divided our time ; longed, she said, to partake of our conversation-visits ; should delight in making one at our little concerts ; and though she seldom danced, should certainly be tempted to foot it in a ball-room so gaily decorated, and spread with so soft a carpet. There was something very much to her romantic taste in our festoons of flowers hung on branches of trees, in our mossy seats, and moon-light assemblies. Lady

Jones gave very little attention to our conversation. With modish indolence she lolled in her chair, tasted a few of the delicacies of her table, but spent most of the time in feeding (with what had better fed the poor) a couple of dirty, snarling greyhounds, her fondness for whom she carries to all the excess of modish affectation. When the servants were dismissed, she began talking to me of my guardian and his sister : the latter, she said, was a worthy, sensible woman, but rather formal in her manner, a little of the old maid, added she. ‘ These maiden sisters (went she on) often by becoming housekeepers to brothers, render those brothers as useless members of society as themselves ; not that this is the case with Sir William ; he, you may have heard, has been married ; and, perhaps, (continued she with a ridiculous simper) were he to meet with encouragement from the object of his choice,



choice, might marry again : indeed, few ladies would refuse such a match : but he has a diffidence ; the world is more eady to make matches for him, than he, from that diffidence is for himself. 'Tis strange, went she on with a half blush, that one cannot be seen in the company of an amiable man, but to be sure a marriage is to be the consequence ; for my part, I declare I have no such thoughts.' 'And I am sure, thought I, if Sir William is the elegant, the accomplished fine gentleman, that same reports him to be, far less can he have thoughts of thee.' I found, however, by her conversation, and her so delightedly dwelling on the subject, that the vain old coquette, (for so she gives me too much reason to call her) is not a little smitten with Sir William.

At tea we had a good deal of company, gentlemen and ladies of the

neighbourhood. This gave me an opportunity to see the best apartments. A perfect palace is her house, and furnished too in the richest manner : every thing about her breathes an air of wealth, even to luxury. What a fortune must my dear father have left, to enable her to figure at such a rate ! for her own fortune is but small, and Miss Jones's fortune only five thousand pounds. Think not, that I feel on this occasion the least tincture of envy ; O no ! it was not my father's riches, which I wish'd to share with her ; it was his love, of which she unjustly robbed me : that, that is the loss which I regret.

L E T.

## L E T T E R IV.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMPROKE.

Melvin Abbey.

**I** DATE this from the sweetest place in nature, my Nancy, the rural romantic beauties of Sudley, joined to all the embellishments which art can bestow, art directed by the finest taste; at this delightful season of the year, how delightful is such a retreat! here, even solitude must have charms; how much more then must it charm, when one enjoys at the same time the society of the virtuous, the sensible, and the gay!

I am so pleased with this amiable family, that I am at a loss which of the worthies first to introduce to your acquaintance.

C 4

Sir

Sir William, ('tis right to begin with the lord and master of the castle,) Sir William Melvin is, without exception, (remember he is old enough to be my father, therefore no arch remarks on the warmth of my encomiums : yet what is five and forty for a man, a man too who looks not near so old ?) he is I say, without exception, the most graceful figure I ever beheld ; and his countenance ! never did I see such expression ; one dare hardly meet the glances of his fine languishing eyes ; they seem to penetrate to one's very inmost thoughts : a soft language, a pleasing melancholy, is diffused over his face. Sir William has been unfortunate in the loss of an amiable and beloved wife, whom he will never cease to lament : his stock of tenderness, exhausted by his first violent passion, will, I fancy, prevent his ever experiencing a second attachment. To think of a woman like  
Lady



Lady Jones, to suppose a man like this would ever bestow a thought on her ;--- a man !---but I will say no more of him ; his praise is in every one's mouth : the christian and fine gentleman were never more happily blended. How knows she all this, on so short an acquaintance ? cries my criticising uncle ; a wonderful share of penetration must she have acquired by her travels, if she can form a judgment at the first glance ; a just judgment at least. No, good sir, I presume not at such an affectation of knowledge : I hope I shall ever be diffident of myself in this point. But I judge from the character given of him by his friends, indeed by all that speak of him ; I need not say foes as well as friends ; for I hardly think Sir William, who seems to exist for no other purpose but to be serviceable to his fellow-creatures, can have a foe. From lady Susan Roachdale, a visiter at the castle,

I chiefly got the information I now give you ; she delights to talk of him. Lady Roachdale is young, handsome, and gay, almost to levity ; she has for about two months been separated from a husband whom she married, to gratify the ambition of her father, much against her inclination : he allows her a very handsome separate maintenance. As Mrs. Melvin, Sir William's sister, was her god-mother, and an intimate friend of her mother's, she has fled to her for protection from the censure of the world. But, my dear Nancy, how terrible to me would be such a situation as her's ! deserting the man, whom at the sacred altar she had vowed to love, honour, and obey for life ! two persons who had been so solemnly joined union pronounced one, now separated, pursuing opposite interests and separate pleasures ! besides, that there is no state so liable to the insults of temptation. None of these

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these disagreeable circumstances however strike lady Susan; she feels again the joys of freedom; she sees herself once more surrounded by admirers, as when single; and she loves the incense of flattery too well to sacrifice her vanity to her discretion. Conscious of her innocence; secure, as she believes, in her pride, if not in her insensibility; she is too heedless of what others may think, while she enjoys her own approbation.

For this night I must bid my friend adieu.

M. MELMOTH.

L E T

## L E T T E R V.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

Melvin Abbey.

**A**CCCEPT, my beloved friends, of the trifling testimonies I send you of my esteem. As the box goes by the fly, you will receive it almost as soon as this. A cousin of lady Susan's who lives in this neighbourhood, and who is on the point of marriage, gave me (by having patterns sent from her mercer's in London, on which we were consulted) an opportunity of sending you my little presents. There is only the quantities proper for night-gowns, as I know my delicately shaped cousins, as well as my Nancy, whose waist is like theirs,

Fine



Fine by degrees,  
And beautifully less ;

are too fond of elegant simplicity to conform to the fashion in hiding those shapes. The rich pale brown tabby spotted with white, will, I hope, suit the taste of my beloved aunt. I remember that my blooming Lucy's admirer said once in my hearing, that she look'd most dazzling fair in pale blue ; and I say, that my Olivia, with her dark glossy hair, clear brown complexion, and rosy cheeks, looks to most advantage in a pale jonquill ; those, in consequence of these opinions, are the colours I have chosen for them. I beg the gowns may be trimmed with the blond I send for the purpose. As to your's, my Pembroke, 'tis a beautiful laylock, in which I am sure you will look like a little Hebe. Dear friends of my heart, love the gifts  
for

for the sake of the giver. And you, my respected uncle, think not I have forgot you : Sir William, ever ready to oblige, has furnished me with the means of procuring you a present, which I know will be acceptable. The variorum edition of Shakespear, published by Stevens and Johnson, and Dr. Newton's quarto edition of Milton. These, my dear uncle, will serve to amuse you, and delight those around you, that customarily listen whilst they work at tambour. Happy family of love and harmony ! happy were the hours I spent in so respectable a society. I hope ere long, my dear sir, to have it in my power to fulfil my promise. A miniature painter is expected at mount Alvin, the feat of the young lady's father who is to be married, as her picture is to be presented to her lover. Lady Roachdale says she will take that opportunity to have her's done, and gaily insisted on Sir William's

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William's following her example ; declaring, in her sprightly way, that she will wear the charming shadow next her heart. I am strongly tempted to believe his image is already there. If this limner comes, my friends at Sudley shall be obeyed : my resemblance then will still be honoured with a place in my late little elegant apartment, and serve to cherish my remembrance in the breast of those friends.

Great preparations are making for the before-mentioned nuptials ; the lady has a very large fortune, and her lover is of high rank. Lady Susan is very busy on the occasion ; fond of any opportunity to display her taste for elegant amusements, balls and concerts will not satisfy her. She has taken it into her head to exhibit the Provok'd Husband, in which we are to be the actors. Sir William laughs at her whim, but there's  
no

no laughing her out of her purpose : I however have absolutely declared, that I will be only a spectator. More of this hereafter.

I cannot yet dedicate so much of my time to my pen as I could wish, not being quite settled in my new abode. Mrs. Melvin, (for Mrs. though a single lady, she insists on being call'd, asserting that Miss is a childish name for a woman of forty) indeed she is in all respects an ornament to her sex, yet sweet and encouraging as her manner is, the dignity of her person and her uncommon prudence excite in me a sort of awe, which however is accompanied with that kind of respectful love, which I feel for her, when I consider myself as her adopted child. My regard for Mrs. Melvin, though of my own sex, is more like that which I experienced for my father ; that father almost with his latest breath



breath committed me to her care : he did not quite forget his child at that awful moment, though I doubt not much pains were taken, by interested persons, to banish me from his memory. To her care, I say, to her prudence I was intrusted : 'tis my duty highly to respect his choice ; she is in a manner invested with his authority, and in every important event of my life, I will study to be directed by her wisdom.

My guardian too shall have all due deference paid by me to his judgment ; I see he never will avail himself of the authority of a guardian : but I also see, that there is that irresistible persuasion in his manner, that a request from him will have the force of a command from others.

LET-

## LETTER VI.

MISS MELMOTH to MISS PEMBROKE.

**I** FIND it impossible, my Nancy, to give you that minute description of persons, and little events, on which you insisted; late hours, (the fault of lady Roachdale) is an enemy to early rising; and a constant succession of company keeps my spirits in a sort of flurry; my mind is too dissipated to settle as I used to do, to my pen. I wish this wedding was fairly over; we shall then, I hope, fall into a more regular plan; not however if our lovely guest can help it; for still life, as she calls it, is of all things her aversion.

I should in its place have told you of a little conquest I had the honour to make; but to say truth, it made so slight

slight an impression even on my vanity, that it absolutely, when I last wrote, escaped my memory ; and yet it was a gentleman of considerable fortune, and, what is still better, a man of good character as to his morals : but I am tempted to believe his sobriety, &c. proceeds more from constitution than principle. Lady Susan, says he, is one of those animals who, like the Dormouse, is born to doze away an insipid existence. 'Tis certain, he was in no respect the sort of man whom I could think of as a husband. Sir William guessing, I fancy, that this would be the case, merely mentioned him to me in consequence of his having promised that he would ; but appeared neither surpris'd nor offended at my answer, which was a positive rejection of his suit, though expressed in terms as polite as the affair would admit of.

So

So ends my first love adventure at  
Melvin-Abbey ; may any that may  
follow end as much to the satisfaction of  
your Mariana. Amen.

For happy is that peaceful breast,  
Where calm indiff'rence reigns.

In spite of all my remonstrances and  
objections, in spite of nature which has  
made me timid almost to a fault, this  
tormenting lady Roachdale has pressed  
me into the service of her strollers, (as  
Mrs. Melvin humorously calls us); nay,  
she has even allotted me one of the prin-  
cipal parts ; and that for the very rea-  
son I pleaded why she should excuse me,  
viz. my rustic bashfulness. Say no more,  
child, cry'd she gaily ; thy blushing  
bashfulness, and pretty rusticity, are  
the very qualities which made me pitch  
on you : without the least trouble to  
yourself,



yourself, without the least study, you are the very Maid of the Mill, the Pamela, the Jennita, in short, the soft, gentle, country maid, whom those authors wish'd to describe. If you was but in love, continued she archly, (why archly I wonder ?) Sir William must try what he can do. She ended this speech with a tap on my cheek, which was as I could feel all in a glow. These rallying ladies, how they delight to put those who have a less portion of modish assurance out of countenance ! I can no otherwise account for my colouring, but that I blush'd because she seem'd to expect I would : (teazing creature,) she added in a half-whisper, you Mariana, have no need to

Teach the cheek the hidden blush to  
shew,

since there is something there, (pointing  
to my heart) which will make you blush  
oftener

oftener than you desire. Sir William was close at her elbow : What, holding forth on the graces of timidity, lady Susan ! (cry'd he :) a strange theme for a town-bred Belle ; in its praise too you must have spoke, when you see before you, in my charming ward, an example of what a seducing, bewitching air it gives to the features.

You are quite mistaken, Melvin, returned she ; I was so far from speaking in its praise, that I was shewing, or rather when you interrupted me, going to shew, that it was one of the most incommodious expressions to which the human face divine is liable. One of your male-creatures, a poet, has said,

They blush because they understand ;

and I believe, spiteful wretches, that you are all of you much more apt to attribute

bute our blushes to that than to modesty. And why not understand and be modest too, said he? perhaps you think of modesty as the Catholicks do of devotion, that ignorance is the mother of it; which by the bye is taking away all its merit. From what principle would you have a woman blush, but because she understands? would you have her teach her cheeks the hidden blush to shew, only to enliven her complexion? blushes should proceed from a modest shame, or from a virtuous indignation. When the ear is wounded with any indelicacy, they blush because they understand: genuine modesty is alive to every sensation that can affect it; shame, one of its guards, rushes upon duty on the slightest attack.

Ah! you may say what you will, interrupted her ladyship, but I shall never be persuaded in favour of a weakness which formerly, some hundred years ago,

ago, used to give me so much pain, and which cost me so many struggles to conquer : and, after all, I think a woman displays more dignity, as well as virtue, who with an air of unblushing resentment openly censures a *double entendre*, for example, than the pretty bashful Miss who sits playing with her fan, and colouring up to the ears. From a married lady, return'd Sir William, or a lady advanced in life, such spirited reproofs are certainly both proper and becoming, and I wish we could see more instances of the kind ; but I think it is inconsistent with that most amiable grace timidity, that feminine reserve which gives such charms to youth, for a young lady boldly to step forth, and publickly to encounter her masculine opposer, even in defence of modesty ; for such a conduct is a breach of it. Silent shame, eyes cast down and hiding themselves as it were from beholding the wretch, who had had the cruelty to insult her ;  
the



the cheeks glowing with virtuous re-  
 sentment ; such, had I a daughter, would  
 I wish to be her conduct, and such, my  
 dear friends at Sudley, since so good a  
 judge of what is delicate approves, will  
 I endeavour to make the rule of my  
 conduct. Adieu ! A summons from  
 lady Susan to attend our rehearsal.

Your's affectionately,

MARIANA.

VOL. I. D L E T-

## L E T T E R VII.

Lady SUSAN ROACHDALE to Miss  
WIVILL.

Melvin Abbey.

**N**O, child, I will not bate you an inch; retract indeed ! on the contrary I am every day more confirm'd in my opinion. Come, I will give you a slight sketch of our party, their characters, persons, &c. and then you will be better able to form a judgment of my boasted felicity.

Our charming society bring virtue, elegance and true politeness into fashion ; 'tis impossible to know Sir William Melvil and his sister, without wishing to copy their manner, and by  
so

so doing, one cannot fail of being agreeable. As you have spent most of your time in France, and as Sir William spends most of his in the country, I fancy you never had the pleasure of seeing him ; all that see must admire : but in order to do him justice, to form a perfect idea of him, you should not only see but hear. What a happiness to a person in my critical situation, to be able to put myself under the protection of people, so every way respectable ! naturally gay, and even a little inclined to coquetry, 'twas no easy task to preserve my reputation, after having separated from my husband. Had I continued in town, the thing would have been impossible ; that one step, however necessary I found it, had already set the tongue of scandal in motion.

I fled then, fled to the charming shades of Melvin-Abbey, and here have

found an hospitable assylum. I said I would give you the character of my friends, and behold, true woman-like, I talk only of myself. Now let them have their turn.

Sir William Melvil, what pen can do him justice ! he is, without exception, one of the finest gentlemen in England : his person graceful and engaging ; his manner polite, and irresistibly insinuating ; his sentiments refined, his understanding naturally superior to most of his sex ; has received the highest polish that a liberal education, and a study of the fine arts, could bestow : but those acquired accomplishments are trifling, when compared to the goodness of his heart : his liberality is equal to his ample possessions ; his tenants, his domesticks and dependents, are treated by him with a paternal care : to sum up his character, he was the most delicately  
tender



tender of husbands ; he is the best, the politest of brothers ; and the most constant, zealous, and warmest of friends. Such is the amiable Sir William Melvil, who at one and twenty married for love, lost his adored wife at thirty, and has for these ten years past unceasingly lamented that loss, and been faithful to his first vows ; no one since that time having been able to make the slightest impression on his heart, where the image of his Maria is too deeply engraved ever to be effaced. This insensibility is the only fault I find in him ; or rather that excess of sensibility, which renders him so strongly susceptible to the impressions of grief : he is however, tho' not tender, exceedingly attentive and complaisant in his behaviour to our sex : not tender, did I say ? I mean not particularly attached, for 'tis not in his power to divest his eyes, and the turn of his features, of that seducing air of softness,

softness, which convinces one that his soul is form'd for love, and tempts one to hope, that the flame extinguished by the cold icy hand of death may yet be re-kindled. Hope ! ah, what have I to do with hopes of this nature ? poor fetter'd mortal that I am ; a widow'd wife, happily freed from my husband's tormenting ill humours ; indeed, freed too from the presence of a man, to whom the ambition of my father sacrificed me : but still I drag along with me my chain, which is only lengthened, not broken. Again I have lost the thread of my subject ; no matter, I had said enough of Melvil, at least to satisfy you. Now for his sister.

She is about two years younger than Sir William ; at nineteen cross'd in love, as they say, she has ever since bid adieu to *la belle passion*, and is now a maid of thirty-five ; but the most agreeable, chearful

cheerful old spinster I ever met with; still handsome in her person, and unspeakably elegant in her manner. I know not a more amiable, a more accomplished woman in all the extensive circle of my acquaintance: her heart is warm and benevolent; her understanding good; her wit piercing, and sometimes a little inclined to the satirical. Her long and firm attachment to my mother, proved how thoroughly she is calculated to be a sincere friend: they had known one another almost from infancy. What an immensity of a letter! adieu, not one word more. I am fatigued.

Yours,

SUSANA ROACHDALE.

D 4 . L E T.

## L E T T E R VIII.

Sir WILLIAM MELVIN to  
ROBERT CORNWALLIS, Esq;

Melvin-Abbey,

**Y**ES, my dear friend, time has softened my grief, though death only can obliterate the memory of that fatal event, which robbed me of my greatest treasure. In the first transport of my sorrow, I determined to bury myself in retirement ; to seclude myself for ever from the world : but this was the wild determination of a disordered imagination. Reason returned ; religion, philosophy, came to my aid, and enabled me to recollect my duty to society : those talents, that ample fortune which providence had intrusted to me, were not



not to be neglected. I was not to live to myself only, but to my country; the poor were to be relieved by my affluence. My fellow-citizens had done me the honour to chuse me as their representative, it would be criminal to desert my post; and since they deemed me worthy of so high a trust, it ought and shall be my study faithfully to discharge it. My fortune sets me above the temptations of bribery and corruption. With disinterested zeal I will endeavour to preserve to them their liberty and property; more desirous of my own approbation than of empty popularity. Ambition is extinguished; I have lost her for whose applause alone I wish'd for fame. Ah! my dear Cornwallis, what a change has that loss produced in me? I am not the man you knew me ten years ago, when you beheld me crown'd with every earthly felicity. I feel our meeting now will greatly affect

D 5

me;

me, it will more forcibly recall to my mind those joys that are for ever fled ; yet I shall soon forget my own grief, when I contemplate the happiness of my friend. Fortune has at last rewarded your merit, no longer need you submit to that worst of all slavery to a susceptible mind, dependance : the greatest blessing that wealth bestows, is that of rendering us independent : you long groan'd under that worst of ills, subjection : well then will you think your toils and dangers repaid, in being freed from it. Come then, my friend, and in this sweet retreat rest from business and fatigue ; come and cheer me by your presence ; come and renew that charming intercourse of friendship, which time, distance, and absence had suspended, but which nothing can weaken on my part.

Melvin;

Melvin-Abbey which became mine on the death of my worthy uncle, is a most delightful spot, the improving it is one of my chief amusements. I spend most of the year in the country : indeed I believe the town would have still less of my company, were I not obliged to attend during the sitting of parliament. Your favourite Caroline who is still single, lives with me ; and the attraction of that amiable sister draws a great deal of good company to my house. We have at present a very agreeable party ; so take care of your heart : Caroline will now stand no chance ; ten years have, as you may suppose, considerably diminished her charms, yet in my opinion she is still handsome, an affair however about which she is perfectly indifferent. But we have here some young and blooming beauties, who will not so easily let you pass them by

unno-

unnoticed : Lady Roachdale is one of those, a gay widow'd wife, separated from a surly husband, whom she married against her consent : she is half wild with joy, at being in some measure restored to freedom, which however she at present uses with proper discretion ; yet as she has a dash of coquetry in her manner, she is no enemy to a little innocent gallantry, as she calls it : fond of admiration, conscious of her charms, her ear is too open to the voice of flattery ; from me she hears none ; I even sometimes take the liberty to join my sister in her prudent lectures, but this only draws on me her witty raillery. She is a most chearful companion, and the life of all our parties ; for in order to amuse my guests, I not only partake of their pleasures, but even sometimes take upon me to be master of the revels. With lady Roachdale then you may flirt, nay must flirt, if you would hope  
to



to enjoy any share of her good graces. But my little blushing ward, Mariana Bouvery, will expect to be treated in a different style : there never was a more lovely girl, she is near twenty years of age, but you would hardly take her to be above eighteen. Her person is delicate, and formed with the most perfect symmetry ; her face is angelic : there is in the air of her features a softness, a feminine sensibility, impossible to be described ; her manner is gentle, timid, and unassuming, yet perfectly graceful.

I am infinitely delighted with the company of this dear girl ; I feel for her the most tender friendship ; no one can see her without experiencing that sort of attachment : though perhaps a slight resemblance, which I fancy I have discovered in her to my adored Maria, may make her so particularly  
pleasing

pleasing to me. I have dwelt so long on the description of this little enchantress, that it would too much lengthen my letter to introduce to you any more of our guests. Adieu!

I am, CORNWALLIS,

Yours most sincerely,

WILLIAM MELVIN.

L E T.

## L E T T E R IX.

Lady SUSAN ROACHDALE to Miss  
WIVILL.

Melvin-Abbey.

**I** REPEAT it again, you know not how to live in town ; or was it the presence of my tyrant, which to me imbittered all its joys ? 'tis certain, I never tasted the true pleasure of life till now. We have here the most enchanting concerts, the most sprightly balls, and the sweetest gambles that you can conceive. I am just returned from one of the latter : our party, the angelic Melvil, lord Wharton, Mrs. Conway, and my little smiling Mariana. We ate strawberries and cream in a beautiful pavilion at the extremity of the park.

Wharton

Wharton trifles most invitingly. I never found myself in such spirits : my beau said a thousand gallant things on the effect the air had on my complexion, and the captivating disorder into which it had disposed my hair : if I might judge by Mariana, there was some room for his flattery, for never did I see the girl look so handsome : her chip hat blown on one side, her ringlets negligently flowing, her cheeks fresh as the new-blown rose : and then she tripp'd along with the light graceful agility of a wood nymph, displaying the most enchanting little foot, and delicate ankle ; even the grave Melvin gazed on her with visible delight : she certainly, envy apart, is one of the sweetest girls in the world, and the most unconscious of her charms ; which is one reason why I find myself capable of doing her justice. Heavens ! if she knew the value of her attractions, if  
the



she was sensible what a world of beauty nature has bestowed on her, she would be too happy ; there would be no enduring her : I at least will take care not to let her into the secret ; I act the friendly part, by endeavouring to keep her humble. The men indeed,—(but their flattery is thrown away) she has no eyes, no ears, for any one but her guardian, and he never flatters. Do you know I have a strong suspicion ? no, I won't tell you, because I hate to be mistaken : gratitude, reverence, and a high opinion of a person's superior understanding, may, in a mind like hers, produce an esteem, the effect of which may have some resemblance to a warmer passion. What I was going to hint at is hardly possible : the man is amiable to be sure, but then he is old enough to be her father ! These sentimental guests have such a soft gentle way with them, I should not wonder if they led the other sex into flatter-

flattering errors ; nothing like a dash of coquetry to put them out of their play, and to enable us to play upon them.

Talking of play reminds me of that which we are going to act next Monday ; an amusement proposed and planned by my ladyship. I have at this moment half a hundred fellows at work, in decorating our intended theatre. Melvin was rather refractory at first, but he is too polite long to oppose a whim, which had so strongly taken possession of my light head. You would have died, Bell, to have heard our disputes as to the piece on which we were to exert our theatrical talents. Mrs. Conway recommended to me the *Fine Lady*, in *Lethe*, as a part in which I should excel : Sir William voted for the *Widow'd Wife* ; Mariana said, (with her colour a little heightened) that she thought the *Conscious Lovers* the most genteel, and least faulty  
of

of our comedies. I looked at her with a rather arch smile, which made her colour ten times more, accompanying that look with, 'Or what say you to the School for Lovers? there is a mighty delicate pretty character of a guardian in it.' This was too much, she was forced to hide her face, by affecting to make use of her handkerchief; but for my part, continued I, I prefer the tragic muse; give me, All for Love, or the World well Lost.

With what a charming enthusiasm was Lee (for example) inspired, when he painted his animated scenes of love? When he was mad, you should say, (cry'd Mrs. Melvin) but come, since you will play the fool, fix on something. I think that as we are all fond of music, and as you, lady Roachdale and Mariana, have both tolerable voices, some light piece in the sing-song style  
would

would best suit your talents : I fear you would make but a bungling business of a tragedy ; it would, as Sir Archy says, be vilely unacted.

The Maid of the Mill then, Bell, is at last to be our first essay : Sir William is to—but stop, I'll compose a play bill, and treat you with it, then fly to conquer my lesson.

The



The MAID of the MILL,

As it is to be performed at

MELVIN ABBEY,

For the amusement of Sir WILLIAM,  
and his select Friends.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord Aimworth by Sir William Melvin,  
Mervin, by Lord Wharton,  
Fairfield, by Squire Wilton,  
Young Fairfield, by Capt. Coats,  
Sir Henry, by Mr. Crofts,  
Patty, by Miss Richmond,  
Miss by the celebrated Lady Roachdale.

Ah !

Ah ! what do I see ! a carriage ! who have we here ! Mariana's mother and daughter, as I live ! this is lucky, we wanted a pair of females to compleat our set, for Mrs. Melvin had declared off, though I had not given up the point.

I must now scribble a few lines more, just to introduce to you our new guests. The character of the widow Jones I can dispatch in two words ; she is neither more nor less than lady Sichymore : Miss Jones is a fine sprightly woman, of five and twenty ; tolerably agreeable in her person, infinitely so in her conversation ; well-bred, sensible, and exceedingly good-humoured ; overlook'd by the men in publick assemblies, not so in a private party ; her vivacity and unaffected carriage often draw off their attention from insipid beauties, and  
fixes

fixes it on herself; her conquest's the triumph of the graces; she is a great favourite of mine, for which reason I bid you adieu, and fly to welcome her.

Yours, &c.

SUSANA ROACHDALE.

LET-

## LETTER X.

From the same to the same.

**L**AST Monday was perform'd before a brilliant and select assembly, with universal applause, The Maid of the Mill, by a party of gentlemen and ladies for their amusement.

The most enchanting play, Bell ! O ! you can have no conception how inimitably we perform'd ! conquer'd the beaux by dozens. Mariana made the most angelic country maid ; her dress so elegantly fancy'd, her modest timid air, and then her sweet plaintive voice : heaven ! in what raptures were the male creatures ! As to Sir William, I am much mistaken, if he did not sometimes forget that he only personated the part  
of



of a lover. When Patty drops on her knees, and prays for his happiness with her rival, I saw he could hardly forbear clasping her in his arms as he raised her. But all this fondness is only because she resembles his Maria, forsooth. O! to be sure. As to the girl, I thought she would have fainted, and when she sung,

In love to pine and languish,  
Yet know my passion vain;

her voice spoke the violence of her emotions. 'Tis a clear case. And, after all, what signifies eighteen or twenty years more on one side than the other, where the man is a Melvin, looking not above half so old as he is, as young at forty by temperance, as most of our modish fine gentlemen are at twenty? And then the girl, all soul like Mariana, tender, refined, sentimental, platonick. O! it positively must, and shall be a match.

I doat upon a wedding, provided I am not the bride : a wedding in the divine style that ours would be too ! delightful balls, concerts, feasts, chatting, laughing, ogling, and all that ; the very extremity of rural felicity !—sure ne'er was seen such a wedding in town ! And now both the damsel and swain begin, (or I am much mistaken) to know with what malady they have for some time been infested. And when all the poor fetter'd souls in England can, from happy experience, assure them that marriage is an infallible remedy for the aforesaid malady, what hinders but that they instantly join hands ? I know no one lawful impediment, nor any one who would forbid the bands. Besides, as we have just ty'd together one silly couple, let's keep it up. The couple I mean, is your friend Sophy Greville, and her Harry Warburton. But I think I sent you one intire epistle upon this subject a few weeks

weeks ago. Ah! no more of it then; enough's as good as a feast: a comfortable old saying, which I learnt yesterday at dinner from 'Squire Groom, after he had eat about ten pound of venison.

Mariana's step-dame is by far the most laughable being on the face of the earth! languishing, fighting, dying for Sir William, who treats her in return with as much reverence and respectful coolness, as he would do his grand-mother. Then my friend Charlotte, her daughter, with the soundest, best heart in the world, she has certainly the most craggy head; bewilder'd in literature, absent, forgetting the common forms of good breeding, yet wishing to be civil to all. Yesterday morning, having never found leisure to view the fine and extensive prospect from Mount Melvin, she made an appointment with Squire

Gerom and his mother, (the only pair of all our party who were not otherwise engaged) to accompany them on that little excursion. Before seven o'clock she rous'd me from my peaceful slumber, by rapping at their apartment; though, if she had but glanced her eye towards the window, she might have saved herself and us the trouble, since it rain'd as hard as it could pour. So the old lady told her. O! it was no matter (she said). If in England people suffered the weather to govern their plans; or to disconcert their parties, they need never two hours before they set off fix on any thing. But no matter, she could go alone; it was only borrowing a pair of pattens from one of the maids. We heard no more of her 'till near eleven, when we were rising from breakfast: then up the fine sloping lawn which leads to the house, spies we the wandering fair, with such a hobble in her paces, that



that we all concluded she had met with some accident, therefore hurried to join her: when enquiring the cause of her lameness; Lameness! (repeated she, casting her eyes down to her feet) what do you mean? But judge what mirth it excited, when we discovered that though she might indeed have borrowed a pair of pattens, yet she had only made use of one, and that with a very high ring, the other foot being left to wade thro' the dirt the best way it could. On my making this discovery she heartily joined in our mirth, protesting that she had never missed it, nor felt the least inconveniency from being so unequally poised. We next ask'd how she lik'd the prospect? and again she was bewildered. After a little recollection, I am certainly the most forgetful creature on earth, (cry'd she laughing) I protest I quite forgot with what intention I sat out, but I have been delightfully amused,

fed, nevertheless, (added she) in chatting to one of Sir William's tenants, who, with as little advantages from education, is almost as great a genius, as the celebrated Ferguson, a perfect philosopher, I do assure you. With all these oddities, she has made a conquest of no small importance, since her arrival; but I fear, from meer inattention, she will let her captive make his escape: happily for her, that would give her very little uneasiness. The person, on whom her charms have made an impression, is the worthy Doctor Martin, a man justly respected by all his parishioners, and much esteemed by Sir William; who, besides great preferment in the church, has a clear estate of eight hundred a year. This worthy mortal is almost as great an original as his Dulcenia. My stars! another match! or at least things *in train* to produce one. Adieu!

SUSANA ROACHDALE.

LET-

## L E T T E R XI.

Lady SUSANA ROACHDALE to Miss  
WIVILL.

Melvin-Abbey.

**S**UCH a beau ! no, this creature cuts them all out. Young, handsome, sprightly, rich, elegant, conceited, careless, well bred ; a dash of the coxcomb, yet sufficiently sensible ; a good opinion of himself, and, by a confident air, forces others to have the same ; in short, a compleat modern fine gentleman ; with easy morals, easy manners, and easy fortune : such is the admired George Craven, Esq; who is just (by the death of his father) come into the possession of two thousand a year. As Sir William is one of the late Mr. Craven's executors, business induced

the hopeful heir to favour us with his company at Melvin-Abbey ; where he arrived last night, in one of the most superb equipages you can imagine, and in a dress too, which gives us a convincing proof of his taste. We were amusing ourselves with looking at some of Sir William's young tenants, who had got a tabor and pipe, and were dancing on the bowling green. Mariana, at my request, had just given her hand to Mr. Crofts, as I had mine to Melvin ; when Craven made his appearance, and for some time prevented our joining the rustic ball. I could perceive that he was, at the first glance, exceedingly struck with Mariana's captivating figure. One stands no chance when that chit is in company : she is a total eclipser. We danced for two hours, and Crofts being sent for home, (on account of some visitors, that, in their way from Bath to London, stopped to take a bed  
at



## FINE GENTLEMAN. 81

at his house) our new beau, eagerly solicited the honour to supply his place, with Mariana ; and, having never before seen an assembly in the pastoral style, was quite delighted by its novelty ; and still more so, by the charms of his lovely partner. Sir William, to compleat the rural scene, ordered a cold collation in the temple, which was illuminated for the occasion. This temple is a perfect fairy palace ; there is no describing it ; but I know, that I never enter it without feeling my spirits raised to a pitch of wildness. Craven joined me in *badinage* ; but, though he flirted with me, I saw his whole soul was ingrossed by Mariana, who has just that degree of vivacity, which serves to enliven the finest features in the world : but at the same time her engaging frankness and innocent chearfulness invites, there is a *retenue* in her manner, that prevents all improper advances, and keeps even  
the

the most daring spirits in awe. Craven experienced this. On I know not what frivolous pretence he had the assurance, not only to kiss my hand, but even to snatch the like favour from my cheek; nor was he the least disconcerted at my anger: but though a favourable opportunity offered, when redeeming a forfeit from Mariana, he whisper'd me, I dare not, I dare not touch those ruby lips. O! that I durst: provoking angel! to be at once so inviting and so repulsing. And what did you see in my face, wretch, (cry'd I) that could embolden you? The most seducing; and at the same time the most encouraging smile, that ever shew'd a dimple to advantage (returned he). There's modest assurance for you! But adieu. I am tir'd.

Your's, ever,

SUSANA ROACHDALE.

L E T-

## L E T T E R XII.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

Melvin-Abbey,

WHAT a letter, my dear Nancy, was your last? it made me enter deeply into the painful task of self-examination. In love! I shudder'd at the bare idea! and yet I own, that I view Sir William Melvin with far different eyes from what I ever did any other man: of this, my Nancy, I did not wish to make a secret. But is this love? a preferable esteem, a high regard even to reverence, a love and admiration of his virtues, a delight in his company, a pleased attention to what he says? all this, without a blush, I freely own. But love, good heaven! I never should have dreamt of such a thing! Such a girl as me to aspire!—No, my dear Nancy,

trust

trust me you are deceived: As one proof of this, I never feel the least emotion on his paying his court to other ladies; never the least emotion, such as I have heard described; on his sudden appearance, on the mention of his name, on meeting his eyes, on the touch of his hand: we may be ignorant in practice, my friend, but, thanks to novels, one is perfectly versed in the theory of that passion: and none of those suspicious symptoms do I discover. Yet will I acknowledge, that, were it possible for Sir William to honour such a chit as me with his regard, I should be proud of the distinction: but I think he is dearer to me, and more amiable, when I endeavour to view him in the light of a father than a husband; though certainly, were he to offer himself as the latter, in spite of the disparity of our years, I would sooner accept of him, than any one that has yet offered, or is likely to offer.

Now



Now I talk of offers, I must inform my dear friends, that I am once more in danger of being addressed by one whom hitherto I see no reason to approve; the mere showy external graces of a handsome person; a mind barren and uncultivated, a bad foil, indeed I fear from which little is to be expected. Sir William seems very attentive to the behaviour of this fine gentleman and me, yet does not appear to desire that I should discourage his assiduities: perhaps indeed from his prudence, he rather wishes to see me so well provided for, as my fortune is small. Ah! I would hope the sentiments of a Melvin are more refined, than to regard the sacred union, marriage, as a mere mercenary bargain of convenience. Though the ideas of a girl at my age are widely different from those which are acquired by experience, and a knowledge of the world; he has done with the romantic,

and

and I, who endeavour to govern myself more by the dictates of reason and the advice of my friends, than by the livelier dictates of a youthful and warm imagination, am determined, that the attachment which my Nancy thinks she has discovered, and from which she foresees such a train of events, shall never make me act inconsistent with the character of which I am ambitious, viz. that of a prudent, virtuous girl, with a sufficient share of common sense to know, that perfect happiness is not the lot of mortals; and who therefore thinks it her duty, as well as true interest, to moderate her desires and expectations; in consequence of which resolution, she will endeavour to bring her heart to approve the man whom her friends shall deem worthy of her regard, if the discerning heart of the world also join in his commendation, and her own judgment does not disapprove: this however

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ever will not, or I am much mistaken, be the case with Mr. Craven. Adieu ! my deservedly happy, amiable companions, ye that were the sweet companions of my infancy ; would you were so still ! Lady Susan, a being of whom you can hardly form a conception, summons me to take a morning ramble.

**MARIANA.**

**L E T**

## LETTER XIII.

MR. CRAVEN to MR. WARRENDER.

Melvin Abbey.

WHAT would you, Warrender, who have so much to say upon every subject, advise a poor d-d to do, who with a fixed, a deep-rooted aversion to marriage, is become enamoured *a la folle*, with a girl who is absolutely uncomeatable by any other means, but that desperate one of, to have and to hold 'till death does us part? It is not that, angel as she is in appearance: I conceive her to be formed of no other materials but good wholesome flesh and blood; consequently that her virtue, taken abstractedly, is not more invulnerable than that of any other blooming British beauty:



beauty : but the plague is, 'tis guarded  
 at all points, and as cautiously watched  
 as the Hesperian fruit : not a male or fe-  
 male in all this sober family, but who  
 seems to regard Mariana Melmoth as  
 their peculiar care : hardly a single op-  
 portunity, so much as to touch the hem  
 of her garment, since my arrival, and I  
 have now been here almost a fortnight :  
 nor know I when I shall have the con-  
 science to put an end to my visit, tho' I  
 have no one decent pretext for prolong-  
 ing it; Sir William Melvin and I, having,  
 'till I thought fit to lodge myself under  
 his hospitable roof, hardly being hat-  
 acquaintances : business indeed gave me  
 a fair introduction, but that has long been  
 dispatched. I stay nevertheless, and sit  
 down to his well-furnished table, with  
 all the ease imaginable ; for there the in-  
 chanting Mariana so wholly ingrosses  
 every faculty, that I think of nothing  
 else,

else, except when compelled to bestow some little attention on a very lively, and, upon the whole, a very lovely madcap of a widow'd wife, who having lost her husband, as to all good purposes in life, seems laudably desirous to fill up the vacancy by an agreeable Cizilbee. At first I believe she had some thought of my worship; but, having a competent share of penetration, she soon saw that it would be love's labour lost, as another had stolen the prize. She sees my passion for Miss Melmoth, and whether it is from envy, or from a natural pleasure in teasing, she plays me so many roguish tricks, that I am, in spite of all my modish effrontery, sometimes absolutely disconcerted, even to the so far losing the command of myself, as to answer her rallery with downright railing.

On one of those occasions she said to me,  
Lovers wear a mask to their mistresses ;  
you

you have not taken that sage precaution with your friend and humble servant. I see you are a passionate wretch; I'll forbid the banns between you and our dove-like Mariana; you are of too boisterous a nature for her; depend upon it, I will put her on her guard: besides, to let you into a little secret, she's otherwise engaged. Ah! is it possible! or was it only female spite? I must watch, yet not a decent mortal have I beheld since my arrival; not a soul that could in conscience dare to vie with me, except it were Melvin, who, to say truth, is a very fine fellow. But then, I presume, a woman is as much prohibited from marrying her grandfather, as a man is his grandmother.

Sir William Melvin, forty at least, to become the husband of Mariana Melmoth, a girl of eighteen! no, no, he has too much sense to dream of such a thing;

a thing ; she will be much better disposed of on your humble servant, if I can but bring myself to submit to the yoke. Adieu !

Yours,

GEORGE CRAVEN.

L. E. T.



## LETTER XIV.

MR. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

**I** SEE, like all other complaisant friends who ask advice, you are, let that advice be what it will, fixedly determined to follow your own inclinations. I foresee you will marry this fine Mariana ; and that you will, like all other husbands, too late lament the loss of precious liberty. You say you have an aversion to marriage. Very likely ; but I suspect it is rather founded on prejudice than reason. You adopt Roach-foucault's maxim without examination, That, though marriage may sometimes be convenient, 'tis never delightful. Now this is a truth of which I have undoubtingly convinced myself, by candidly

didly weighing all that can be said for and against it, as well as from a thousand examples: nothing on earth therefore could prevail on me to submit to the yoke.

I am professedly a libertine, taking that word in its proper sense, a free thinker, and a free actor; restrained by no laws but those of nature, and those of honour, which is a part of the former. For example, I think it beneath the dignity of a rational creature, to be guilty of a falsehood; for that reason, I never, even in love affairs, promise more than, at the time at least, I mean to perform: no vows of eternal constancy, no offers of honourable separations in future, not a single hint of matrimony. Hitherto, I have not met with any fair one so cruel as to seduce me to the temptation of deceiving her. But What, you will perhaps ask, would you do in my situation, where

where the nymph is to be purchased on no other terms, and when you find the possession of her absolutely necessary to your happiness? Why, in such a case, I fear I should be apt to deviate a little from those principles, by which in general I am governed.

Self-love is our ruling passion, my first, my grand pursuit is to render myself happy; in subordination to that, where our interests do not clash, I would promote the happiness of others. My mind is totally freed from superstitious prejudices. I believe virtue to be its own reward, and likewise vice to be its own punishment: so that to avoid uneasy reflections and remorse, morality in general shall govern my actions. I mean, however, that rational kind of morality which does not abridge our pleasures. If I seduce the wife or sister of my friend, I use all imaginable precaution

caution to keep it from his knowledge, that I may not disturb his peace : but if he should discover it, I am ever ready to give him all the satisfaction which honour requires. As to the ladies : I contribute to their pleasure, as much as they do to mine ; add to that, I never boast so, that if their secret is betrayed, it must either be by their own indiscretion, or some unlucky, unavoidable accident. I leave myself on these occasions, no room for self-reproach. All monopolies in this country are contrary to the laws of trade. If a man will play the fool, and marry, that is no reason why he should expect to keep his wife, if she be temptingly fair, wholly for his own use. Do not you, Craven, be so weak as to hope for this. If I, for example, should chance to like your purchase, depend upon it, I shall not scruple to use all my rhetoric, in order to come in for a share of the commodity.

You



You profess to be a man of reason as well as me, that is to say, a free-thinker ; you act inconsistent with your creed, nay, inconsistent with common sense, if you make not the most of life ; since all we have to avoid is the punishment inflicted on vice by the laws of our country, and that of going such lengths as to create uneasy sensations in our own breasts.

The stings of conscience, as your priests call them, none of those men of our cast feel, except we plunge into the last excess of wickedness. If then you have the fear of cuckoldom before your eyes, fly from the enchantress who would enslave you ; try the effects of absence, and a new face : if you are too far gone to be capable of flight, why then fate must take its course, you must e'en marry : I think a divorce, at worst, may again restore you to liberty. If I

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have leisure, and no other particular engagement of the heart, I may perhaps, out of friendship, help you to procure one. Adieu! I have thought so much on your affairs, that I have not had time to mention my own, though they never were more interesting than at present. In return for my complaisance, you must next post give me leave to talk largely to you on that subject. Farewell.

Your's sincerely,

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

Still at lord W—s enchanted castle,  
where I am ty'd, and bound with all  
the chains of love.

LET-

## L E T T E R XV.

Mr. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

Mac-Aimore Castle, in the North:

**T**HESE two spotless sheets of paper, large as they are, do I dedicate wholly to Orlando Warrender, and the most angelick of women, Jessy Livingston. Do you, Craven, remember a girl who struck us both so forcibly at the grate of a convent on our way to Paris, where we stopped to have a little chat with the pious sisterhood? That dear, that lovely girl, is now at this present moment under the same absolute roof with your happy friend, and mistress of his heart. We had then but a transient glance; like the Parthian she shot flying; new objects for a time ba-

nished her from my memory. Lord W—, with whom we both became acquainted during the course of our travels, returned with me to England; you remained at Florence. In passing through Lisle, he told me he must stop some days to give a cousin of his, who was in a nunnery there, time to prepare for a voyage, and very long journey: as I have promised (added he) to conduct her safe, as far as lies in my power, to her father, and friends in the Highlands. My fair unknown instantly darted across my thought; it may be her, whisper'd I, and my heart, at the bare idea, bounded with transport. In the afternoon, we went ensemble to the grate; and there, by the appearance of my charmer, did I, with rapture find that I was not deceived in my fond hopes. I found her, on a nearer inspection, ten thousand times more lovely than fancy, aided by a slight glance, had imagined.

Figure



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Figure to yourself. But you can't. Instead of the divine Jessy, you'll see only your Mariana. In two words, she is perfectly handsome, and uncommonly accomplished; nature and education have both done their utmost to make a perfect she. You may believe, a girl like her is no easy conquest; considering too, that I her admirer am obliged to tread in crooked paths; and that I differ with her in so material a point as religion. My fair one being a biggotted catholick, I, you know, a rigid protestant; she strictly virtuous, I a determined foe to matrimony: so that I have not the advantage of addressing her in the common form. No speaking to papa, or interesting our aunts and cousins: the difference of our faiths would to them be a sufficient obstacle; and my free principles debar me of the privilege of their becoming my advocates. Since for what do I sue? an union that

scorns all bonds but those which love has made; yet, in spite of all these lets and hindrances, I do not despair. You know this person of mine has done no small execution in its time: and then I have a tongue, which, if I may believe some fair ones, would deceive and seduce even the grand seducer of mankind.

This encomium, might indeed be rather made as an excuse for their weakness, than my strength. 'Tis universally allowed however, that I am a sensible agreeable fellow, and have a most engaging way with me (excuse this seeming vanity). I am forced every now and then, to number my perfections, in order to keep up my spirits; and, to give me courage, relying on my forces, to continue my hitherto unsuccessful attack. Not quite unsuccessful neither: the citadel indeed is still unsundered; but

but the out-works are some of them rather upon the totter ; such as ungenerous mistrust, prudish reserve, and coquettish deceit : of the latter, she is in every respect incapable. I had a thousand delightful opportunities, during our too short voyage, to ingratiate myself with her : she all artless, I all soft, tender and assiduous ; soothing her fears, when apprehensive of danger from the boisterous element ; fond, yet respectfully attentive to her when sick, and studious to amuse her when well. How could the grateful maid refuse some share of her good graces, to one who strove to prevent her very wishes ? One is permitted to take a number of little liberties too, in such a situation, where males and females are so comfortably huddled together, and where fear and sickness lower the spirits. O ! sweet were then the joys I tasted ! I made a greater progress by sea in twenty-four

hours, than I could have done by land in as many months. Venus in her native element was at hand to aid my suit. I quitted not however my lovely companion, when on shore. Lord W—, who is a very worthy fellow, though confoundedly priest-ridden, pleased with company, and desirous of cultivating my friendship, invited me, as I had no particular plan in view, to continue my route with him, and to pass a few months at his castle in the Highlands. High or low, all places are alike to me, where Jessy Livingston resides. He told me, that he proposed to ask old Livingston's leave, to let his daughter stay during the summer with his sisters; but doubted much if he should be able to obtain his consent, for he is (continued he) one of the most obstinate old Grecians in nature; an obstinacy which has acquired new force from misfortunes; misfortunes which, instead of humbling,



humbling, have strengthened his native pride. It seems he lost a considerable estate in the late rebellion; but by the interest of some powerful friends at court, he about a twelvemonth ago received his pardon; and, enthusiastically fond of his native country, he returned to it and poverty, rather than continue affluent in exile, (for while abroad he received an *entrou* from the king of France). He left his daughter, whose education (having lost his wife when Jessy was an infant) he superintended, though she received it in a nunnery. He left her there, I say, on the before-mentioned occasion, and returned to Scotland; though he no longer could boast of being master of one foot of land, that a few years before was lord of many hundred acres. His nephew, lord W—, was chief of the clan, from him he condescended with reluctance to receive a small well-stocked farm, at which he

now resides, and to which he threatens, ere long, to conduct his lovely daughter; there, in obscurity, like a rose in the desert, to bloom and die unseen. Ah! forbid it heaven! Adieu, Craven. I am summoned. I shall, when I retire to my apartment, most likely resume my pen.

Your's, &c.

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

L E T -

## L E T T E R XVI.

From the same to the same.

**I** WISH we could engage our pair of divinities in a correspondence : then, by a few allowable stratagems in love, how easily could we come at the secrets of their hearts ! Cannot I, you will ask, avail myself of her correspondence nearer home ? has she no confidants in the family ? Doubtless it must be so, since there are other females amongst that number. You would not ask the question, if you could see the contrast between Jessy Livingston and my lord's sisters, the ladies Wiolet and Christy ; such mere hoydening untaught rural damfels !

By way of variety, I'll give you a short sketch of my journey, of my recep-

ception from those rosy Caledonian nymphs, and a few traits of their character, as well as of their venerable aunt, lady Margret Fraiser, a spinster, almost as old as the castle she inhabits.

For the first : We traversed barren mountains, uncultivated vallies, where neither tree nor cottage were to be seen for miles, but the presence of my Jessy could make even a desert smile ; nay, to own the truth, independant of that, I was not a little amused with the novelty of the scene, so different from those I had quitted in that paradise of the world, Italy : to which however, I thought myself again transported, when we came within sight of our destined habitation. I was absolutely enchanted with the charmingly romantic prospects that then met my eyes. My lord's ancestors have cultivated every inch of their



their estate ; which is very extensive, and where nature has furnished them with all desirable capabilities. The hills here are all planted, the plains covered with verdant grass, or waving with yellow corn : clear rivulets, and rushing natural cascades, together with neat villages, compleat the pleasing rural scene : his castle has all the charms of venerable antiquity to recommend it, and seems impregnable ; the walls of it being at least six yards thick, adorned with towers and battlements, that promise to stand as long a siege as the renowned Troy itself did. I should have told you, that a few miles before we reached it, our horses thought fit to take rest, as they call it here, in ascending a tremendous mountain : they were very wise in this, 'twas no more than what I would have done myself. I do not however commend them, for seeming obstinately bent to take up their residence  
in

in the spot where they stopped, and from whence neither threats nor intreaties could prevail on them to move; so that at last we their lords and masters were obliged to give up the point, and e'en to betake ourselves to our feet. Every misfortune has some alloy. I had the honour of supporting the sweet Jessy in our walk, which was no short one, being obliged to continue it till our servants could exchange our coach for saddle horses; on one of which I placed my amiable charge, pressing her hand with my lips as I lifted her on: and again we continued our march. The next impediment to our course was a chrystal stream which ran between a hill and beautiful valley, in the midst of which stood the castle. Here we paused, when on the opposite side appeared the divinities of the place, lady Violet, and lady Christy, the eldest not above eighteen, both of them true Highland beauties;

beauties; that is to say, tall, strapping  
 lasses, robust and blooming as milk-  
 maids; a style of beauty very little to  
 my taste. Eh! there's my brother,  
 (cry'd the youngest) and instantly tuck-  
 ing up her petticoats some degrees above  
 her ankles, (no cause indeed had she to  
 be ashamed of remarkably well-turn'd  
 limbs) skipp'd on what they call the  
 stepping-stones, in the water, leaping  
 from one to another, as nimbly as a  
 fawn, and quickly reached us. Lord  
 W— dismounted, and flew to embrace  
 her: I also as a proper mark of respect  
 quitted my horse, and as it is here the  
 fashion to salute men, women and chil-  
 dren, very willingly in that too fol-  
 lowed his lordship's example: the fair  
 one, without the least ceremony, held  
 out her pretty rosy mouth, (would I  
 could teach Jessy to be as tractable). My  
 lord next introduced the fair cousins to  
 each other; and having crossed the  
 stream,

stream, we renewed our ceremonies on the other side, to the ladies Margaret and Violet. I very slightly touch'd the wither'd cheek of our good aunt; but that no jealousy might be excited between the sisters, I made as free with Violet's ruby lips, as I had done with those of the smiling Christy. I fancy'd that my Highland Queen, angelic Jessy, look'd a little grave on the occasion; nor was that gravity at all diminished, when her younger cousin, after our having gone through the etiquette of Scots-politeness, seized hold of my arm, with most agreeable familiarity, nor quitted it, till we reached the mansion: there we were entertained with all the plenty of welcome hospitality. It was in the land of Cakes, I presume, where that good old saying first took its rise; G—d sends good meat, the d—d sends cooks. I shall say no more of our dinner. But our breakfast next morning.—How I star'd!



star'd ! A large table, cover'd from end to end, with tea, coffee, hams, eggs, tongues, porrage, jellies, marmalade, honey, &c. &c. &c. Like the afs between the two bundles of hay, I stood a chance of being starved in the midst of plenty, not knowing what to fix on, amongst such a droll assortment : nor should I, perhaps, till now, have made my choice, had not bonny Christy saved me the trouble, by presenting to me a *collar'd egg*, the fellow to which she devour'd in a trice, washing it down with half a dozen basons of tea, intermixed with ham, and bread and butter. Those fair amazons are fit to produce a race of heroes, a Spartan commonwealth : after all, they answer the end of their creation much better than our squeamish belles, who bring into the world a set of smock-faced beaux, as delicate and effeminate as themselves.

I am

I am this morning going to take a ride with his lordship, in order to view his improvements. Lady Margaret is seated at her wheel, the ladies Violet and Christy I left in the hall, dancing a reel with their cousin Willy Stuart, to the sonorous sound of a Highland bagpipe; which, by the bye, is most admirably (when well play'd) calculated for that purpose. Joyous creatures! they are merry from morning to night; but their vivacity rather consists in motion than words: they cut jokes with their feet, and are witty with their hands, when they slyly steal a handkerchief, or whisk a chair from behind an acquaintance, who plumps to the ground. The tongue has nothing to do with this kind of archness. What a difference between them and my Jessy! from her ruby lips, flow genuine wit  
and

and sentiments, that Virtue herself might own. Adieu! How goes on your amour?

Your's,

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

LET-

## LETTER XVII.

Mr. CRAVEN to Mr. WARRENDER:

**I** SHALL soon cease to wonder at any thing. Would you believe it, Warrender? the girl actually shews a visible partiality for Melvin, a fellow old enough to be her father. What depravity of taste! I hope however this is a secret, to all but the prying and jealous eye of love.

As you say, Orlando, a divorce can at worst restore me to liberty, should I play the fool and marry: but does not an affair of that kind, some way or other affect a man's honour? In the days of yore, I believe it was so deemed; but our notions now are more liberal.

Let



Let me see, I have here a list of those fashionable husbands. What says it? The right honourable lord——: right honourable still you find; 'tis sufficient; I'll e'en venture: with Bays I exclaim, it is resolved. I must take myself while in the mind; if I deliberate, she's lost. Now Sir William be in the way; I come in due form to solicit your aid. I will not close this till that grand affair is dispatched.

In Continuation.

A provoking Jeffy, to lead me into such awkward scrapes! a man looks so silly! 'tis a foolish affair! it will be some hours ere I am reconciled to myself. I met lady Susan as I flunk from Sir William's library, and fled as swift as if she had detected me in a theft; but I was not prepared to stand her raillery, and fancy'd that, like Cain, I had already the mark set upon my forehead,  
and

and that all who saw me, would laugh me to scorn.

To speak plain English, I have revealed my most honourable passion to Melvin, and besought his interest in my favour with his ward. He listen'd with all the dignity of one who knew he had it in his power to oblige, and therefore, wanted to make a merit of it; or perhaps there was a little rivalry in the case. He changed colour on my first address, and when I expected some degree of gratitude to be expressed for my generosity, in thinking of an alliance so inferior to what by birth and fortune I might aspire to, he only loosely said, I pretend to no authority over Miss Melmoth, in so nice, so delicate a point: I should hardly dare even to offer my advice: but I shall certainly mention your proposal to her, and then her heart and judgment must determine. So saying, he made a motion

tion as if going to resume his books, on which, with a rather resentful air, I hastily left the room. I'll have the girl now, if it was but out of spite : her mother-in-law, a silly old coquette, who had just left them when I arrived, is again returned. At the first glance I fathom'd the depth of her shallow understanding : a very little flattery will secure her in my interest. I think she will be the more inclined to this, as she seems desirous to get rid of her daughter, having, as I could last night perceive, some fears of her being too much in Melvin's good graces, on whom, she herself casts a favourable eye. Strange ! that an honest fellow should be obliged to puzzle his brain to get a wife. A mistress indeed deserves some trouble, but the former ought joyfully to leap into one's *lawful* embraces, and to be thankful that one will take her on such honourable terms, when so many are  
to

to be purchased at one's own price. Yes, I do remember your Jeffy ; remember that she was handsome ; but dare not to set her charms in competition with those of my Melmoth ; you might as well compare a rush candle to the sun. Adieu ! compliments to your friend, and success attend your love-like machinations.

L E T.



## L E T T E R XVIII.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

**Y**OU cannot conceive how I have been agitated, my dear Nancy ; nor know I when I shall recover from my confusion and painful emotions.

This morning, just after breakfast, when I had retired to my apartment, lady Jones's woman, (who, I should tell you, arrived here yesterday, as did her worthy daughter by the bye : no one who is ten minutes in company of my good mother-in-law, if Sir William is present, but who may easily account for her frequent visits at the abbey.) Her woman, I say, came bouncing into my room, while I was dressing ; exclaiming, Miss, miss, Sir William

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waits for you in his study ; come quick, let me help you to dress. Your maid, (added she, affecting an arch look) will soon have this pretty sack : wedding garments must all be spick and span new. There has Sir William been shut up with my lady, and I know who was the subject of their discourse. Lord ! — well, I little dreamt that we should hear such news on our visit. While she thus ran on, she affected to assist my Abigail : for my part, I was ready to sink with various emotions. Sir William, waiting for me in his library ! shut up with my mother-in-law ! I the subject of their discourse ! What could all this mean ? You are a strange creature, (said I to the woman) throwing myself into a chair, I wish you would be pleased simply to deliver your message, without mixing with it any of your pleafantry. My message is easily delivered, (returned she) I was only bid to tell you,

you, by my lady, that Sir William, who to be sure is one of the sweetest men in the world, had been asking her consent, to make certain proposals to you. I felt for my faults, I was ready to faint, Good God ! whisper'd I to myself, is it possible ! I dare not believe it. O ! if it should, what shall I say ? how, support so interesting a scene ? See, my Nancy, how freely I discover to you the weakness of my heart : I durst not, or rather I had not power to ask a farther explanation ; and ere I recovered from my first agitation, the prattling messenger was summoned to attend her mistress. I finished my dress, but what then ? Could I, on such an occasion as I supposed it, go in search of Sir William ? While I stood irresolute, making a sufficiently silly figure, lady Jones, with a gay air, entered my room. What miss ! have you not yet dispatched the labours of your toilet (cry'd she) ? but

to say truth, one is on some occasions apt to take more than usual pains. My woman, I presume, (added she, affecting a graver air) delivered my message : Sir William is, no doubt, impatient. How you blush, (continued she spiteful enough) into what a pretty flutter has the prospect of this tête-à-tête thrown you ? come, I'll lead the way. In saying this, she went out, and I, all agitated and confused, followed. Sir William met us at the door of his study. We have had, as is common, some maidenly tremors (said she to him smiling), but I believe the worst is now over, and that I may spare myself the trouble of wishing you success in your undertaking ; though, I assure you, 'tis what I very sincerely desire. What, Nancy, could I conjecture from all this, but what I did too flatteringly conjecture ? Sir William, with an air a little embarrassed, took my hand, conducted  
me



me to a sofa, and placed himself by me : there for some minutes we both continued silent, my eyes fixed on the ground, his as I saw (on venturing to steal a glance) on my blushing face. At last, let me intreat my dear miss Melmoth, (said he) to regard me as her true friend ; but let not any idea of authority or guardianship mix with it, lest complaisance, and that gentle dutiful submission to those whom she regards in the light of parents, should bias her judgment, or tempt her to put any force on her inclinations ; let her heart, guided by a head mature in sense, though young in years, ever direct her choice. I hardly know how to proceed, my dear Mariana, (added he, taking my hand,) deeply interested as I am in the subject. Perhaps lady Jones has informed you, that I wish to make proposals to you, for a man, who, however unworthy he may be in some respects, is at least

truly sensible of your worth. Ah! sir, interrupted the blushing simpleton, unworthy do you say? who is worthy if he is not? proposals from him I will freely own, what ever disparity.—I paused, I was ready to die with confusion, lest I should have said too much. At that moment lady Jones, unseasonably as I thought, entered the room. Well, Sir William, (cry'd she,) what success? Does Mariana listen to your suit? I think she can have no objection; but you rate her merit so very high. She has not any objections, madam, returned he, with a grave, and rather a melancholy air, (which at the time struck me as improper for the occasion). I am charmed, interrupted my mother, 'tis a match on which I have set my heart: I thought your eloquence could not fail to move, but we too long continue the subject. Go with me, Sir William, (continued she) putting her arm under his

his, we will in the garden talk farther of the affair. Mean while Mariana will have time to recover from those emotions, inseparable from susceptible minds on such occasions. They went out together, leaving me in a situation not to be described. As I had no doubt, but that Sir William meant himself when he talked of a man, who, however unworthy in some respects, was at least truly sensible of my merit, so I was infinitely astonished, at the reception my too ready avowal of mutual regard, met with from him. I was ready to expire with confusion at the recollection of my weakness; shocked to death, that I should have behaved with impropriety, before the man on earth of whose approbation I was most ambitious. While I sat motionless, indulging the most painful reflections, the door opened, and in sprung Mr. Craven; affecting an air of transport, he ran and threw himself at

my feet ; Thus, cry'd he, let me thank my angel for her condescending goodness. Sir William has dissipated those doubts and fears, which a sense of my unworthiness had created : doubts and fears, indeed, inseparable from genuine love : he and lady Jones have filled my heart with rapture, by informing me, that my passion is not displeasing to you, by giving me hopes, that you will favourably listen to my suit. The man's mad, (at last interrupted I, having a little recovered from my surprize.) I approve your passion ! I listen to your suit ! They could not, they would not sure so far transgress the bounds of truth, or, unprovoked, so grossly insult us both. But added I, after a pause of recollection, this mistake may proceed from my want of attention, for that it is a mistake, I do most solemnly assure you ; since I never once designed to encourage your passion, to which my heart  
is



is averſe. Whoſe paſſion then, cry'd he fiercely, and ſtarting up, did you mean to encourage? That queſtion, Mr. Craven, is impertinent; I cannot perſuade myſelf that you have any right to call me to an account. At that moment, lady Jones, who ſeemed to be every where at once, ſo ſpitefully zealous waſhe to draw me into a ſcrape, entered the room. Your ladyſhip ſaid I, turning to her with an air of diſdain, haſ been quite lavish of your wit, this morning; 'tis a pity that you could not a little longer carry on the farce. What do you mean, child? (ſtaring) I witty! I do not underſtand you. We ſeem all to be playing at croſs purpoſes, (interrupted Mr. Craven peeviſhly); I was flattered by what you, madam, and Sir William ſaid, that I ſhould have met with a very different reception from miſs Melmoth. You ſurpriſe me, ſir, (return'd ſhe) I thought Mariana had been

above all female trifling, and childish caprice, and that she would not have authorized her guardian and me to say what we did say to you, except she had been freely determined in her own mind, to abide by those favourable sentiments she then freely professed for you. Who, I madam? (interrupting her with resentment) I entertain favourable sentiments of Mr. Craven! This is the drollest scene I ever was witness to in my life (cry'd she, affecting a laugh). Pray, sir, retire for a while, till I have talked a little more particularly to her on the subject: when you meet again, Mr. Craven, I trust, you will be treated in a manner more worthy of you. He bow'd and left us. I then, unable longer to restrain myself, burst into tears; while I sobb'd out, What have I done to deserve such treatment? to be by cruel and wanton malice compelled thus to expose myself? I pass over your reproaches,

proaches, miss, (said she) but I should be glad to know, what you mean by my having compelled you to expose yourself. I never heard any body talk so wildly. All I did was to send my maid to inform you, that Sir William had been with me this morning, to solicit my consent to his making proposals to you for his friend Mr. Craven. I did not indeed name the gentleman to my Betty, delicacy forbid that; but surely your guardian would tell you who it was; or if not, you might have taken the trouble to make that enquiry ere you discovered your sentiments: and, after all, who could you mean, but Mr. Craven, whose addresses would be so acceptable to you? I know no other that at present makes any pretensions, or seems so likely as him to have engaged your affections. Whether you know or not, (interrupted I, in anger) I do positively assure you, that Mr. Craven

has

has not, nor ever will, and so you may tell Sir William; for my resolution as to him, is unalterably fixed, nothing on earth shall prevail on me to be his. Do me the favour, madam, I repeat, to tell my guardian what I say, and also, that I would wish to return for a few months to Sudley farm, to which place, my aunt and cousins strongly invite me. Had you not better talk to Sir William yourself, on these subjects? (said she, with spiteful archness) he no doubt will be curious to know who it was, that you said could never be unacceptable to you. She paused. I blushed scarlet deep, partly with shame, partly with resentment at being so cruelly teased. I never will talk to him on any such subject, (cry'd I hastily) let him think as he pleases: all I ask is leave to return to my friends. Mrs. Melvin's absence at this time, (added I) is most unfortunate for me (she has been absent a week,



a week, being summoned to attend a relation, who is supposed to be dying, so that her return is uncertain ; and as to lady Susan, she is not one, who I could prevail on myself to consult on such an occasion as this. O ! that I was now with my Nancy !

Lady Jones left me, with an assurance that she would let Sir William know my resolution as to Mr. Craven, who, she hoped, would easily be prevailed on to relinquish the pursuit, since he might aspire to a much more advantageous match, both in point of birth and fortune, than me. I much fear she will find herself mistaken, for the man has discovered an uncommon share of obstinacy in his temper : besides, I feel I have strong forebodings, that I am born to be unfortunate. Ah ! can I be otherwise ? Foolish girl ! to flatter myself with such delusive dreams of happiness.

ness. Adieu! prepare my loved friends to receive once more your grateful Mariana, not indeed so much at ease, as when she left you, but equally affectionate.

M. MELMOTH.

L E T -

## L E T T E R XIX.

Mr. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

**T**H E clan of Macaimore pour in upon us to day like a deluge, to pay their yearly visit to their chieftain : Parlour, kitchen and hall are full of them : my teeth are almost broken with their hard names. We have the laird of Mc. Nabb, the laird of Crederick, the laird of Croglins, and half a hundred more ; but I must learn Earse ere I can finish my list. I think I counted no less than twenty-seven kisses, which I gave and received in the space of an hour : 'tis absolutely making a fatigue of a pleasure, though I laid them on as light as a feather upon the old ladies cheeks,

cheeks, not willing to discompose their toys. Livingston, father of my charmer, came amongst the rest ; a venerable piece of antiquity, with silver locks, an air, which in spite of coarse and plain apparel, speaks the gentleman. Lord W——, with more warmth than I could have wish'd, spoke to him in praise of his fair daughter, with whose company he said, both her aunt and cousins were delighted : he might have added, and with which my honest friend Warrender, and your humble servant are still more so. The good old man's eyes glister'd with pleasure at those just encomiums. To me, cry'd he ! to her fond father she appears all, nay more than you can describe ; indeed she is now my only treasure ; but I glory in my poverty : had I twenty estates, I would chearfully forfeit them all, in so just, so noble a cause. Weell said, man, exclaimed lady Margaret, clapping



clapping him on the shoulder, I hope we shall both live to see the day

When the king shall enjoy his ain again.

You find, George, that I am got amongst a set of Jacobites; most of the ladies are openly so. As to L. W—he is too prudent to reveal his sentiments on that head; but as he is a catholick, and his title untainted, (his father having been less cautious) one may give a shrewd guess what they are.

At dinner the worthy old man launched out on his favourite subject, in which he was heartily joined by lady Margaret, who is a great politician. I was a little unguardedly drawn into the dispute, in which I fear, though I had the best of the arguments, I lost more than I gained by the contest. Livingston eyed me with looks that did not  
speak

ſpeak him much prejudiced in my favour. In the courſe of our converſation, I recommended the judicious Blackſton to him, as an author, who talks with great impartiality, and no leſs ſenſibly on the nature of our government and conſtitution. I am too old to go to ſchool again (returned he) : I may ſay of my political faith, as ſome one did of his religious faith ; ‘ I do not at theſe years remember by what arguments I was convinced, but I know that they once did ſtrongly convince me, when my reaſon was ſound and in it’s vigour ; and what ſerved in my youth ſhall ſuffice for my age.’ What ſay you to that determination, fair Jeſſy ? (cry’d I, turning to her with a ſmile) Is not your worthy father a little obſtinate on this occaſion. ’Tis not very probable, that my daughter, (interrupted he) ſhould give it againſt me. Heaven forbid ſhe ſhould in this point feel the leaſt inclination

tion to dissent! I know this at least, that not the first lord in the land, poor as she is, should call her his, were not his religion, his principles, the same as mine. (Pretty encouragement for me, George; but I do not mean to ask either his consent or approbation, so 'tis the less matter you know). He added, I would despise his wealth and grandeur, and deem it a dishonour to match my child with a traitor to his king. I coloured. Sir, (cry'd I fiercely) I hope you do not mean any personal—Livingston hastily interrupted Lord W——, You are indiscreet, I will not suffer those kind of disputes in my house. We are all friends here; ours is a rural life; let us then leave the fiery and contentious spirit of party to restless and ambitious courtiers; be their pursuit empty fame and toilsome grandeur, ours friendship, contentment, love, and peace.

I liked

I liked not the look with which Jeffy honoured him on the delivery of this fine speech, it was by much too favourable : I believe it pierced us both to the heart, but mine it pain'd while his it pleased. Heavens ! she does not, shall not, must not love him ; though it is lately too visible, that he beholds her with very partial eyes. My hope is, that as we are generally struck with our opposite, your friend Orlando stands a better chance than his lordship : he a sober fellow, I all mirth and whim, since our goddess, sweet creature ! a goddess this moment, now a creature. No matter, she is I say of a sweetly pensive turn, and therefore I'll lay my life would prefer a lively-spirited fellow to a sentimental humdrum. I have another hope, and that is, that well as W— likes her, his pride will never suffer him to think of so unequal an alliance : yet her family  
is.



is as good as his ; but it is reduced to poverty, and her father is neither better nor worse than a petty farmer. Lady Margaret, who has all that haughtiness for which ladies of this country are distinguished, would go wild did she but suspect he could ever dream of such a thing ; and if he cannot bring himself to think of her as a wife, I know his ideas of things are too narrow and too much tinged with vulgar prejudice, to suffer him to think of her in any other light.

Thus have I partly reasoned away my fears, ever too sanguine to despair of any undertaking on which I thought it worth my while to set my heart. On this occasion, I could brave a thousand obstacles ; indeed I have already discovered almost that number to surmount. The lady's character is one of them : she is one of those women so rarely found,

found, whose genuine virtue is founded both on principle and constitution; a virtue guarded by religion, good sense, and a sort of philosophical coolness, which sometimes tempts me to fear, that she is not endued with sensibility, that greatest charm of the sex : and yet the expression of her fine eyes, the soft compassion which makes the pearly tear trickle from them, whenever they behold an object of distress, or when she listens to a tale of woe, convinces me, that to love alone she is unfeeling, and cool. O be it my fate to warm her charming heart, and to give it the first sensation of that delightful passion ! Adieu ! my letters are of an unconscionable length, and yet I say not a word of your affairs. What would you have me say ? you are engaged about sober matrimony : 'tis a subject quite out of my sphere. I hope, however, that

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that you will gain the girl, even on these hard terms, since the possession of her appears so very necessary to your felicity. Adieu, once more. Cupid assist us both.

Your's,

O. W.

L E T.

## LETTER XX.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

**O** MY dear Nancy, judge of my feelings on receiving this morning the following letter from Sir William ! Good heavens deliver me from the power of an enemy, so artful, so bent on mischief, as her I have to deal with. But I will fly to you, my friends ! quickly let me fly, lest a worse misfortune overtake me. Read, and my meaning will be explained.

The Letter.

Sir WILLIAM to Miss MELMOTH.

What shall I say to my lovely, and  
 [beloved ward, for such a flattering  
 proof



proof as she has honoured me with of her regard, and the confidence she has in what she is pleased to call my judgment and experience. But, my dear child, do you not carry that complaisance too far? I was quite astonished, when lady Jones told me this morning, that fancying from my looks when you revealed your approbation of Mr. Craven, that I differed from you in opinion, and that he was not the man of my choice as well as yours, you had determined to conquer your partiality, and to submit to my better judgment: nay, she added, that you had gone so far, as to give him a very cool reception after we left you. Does not this, my amiable Mariana, appear a little capricious? What can he think of such a conduct? Is it miss Melmoth, who one moment professes so favourable an opinion of a man, as to think of him in the light of a husband, yet the next,

without his having either said or done any thing to offend her, she precipitately comes to the resolution of rejecting him? Think better of it, my sweet charge: Mr. Craven, in point of rank and fortune, is unexceptionable: these are indeed, what I would wish to have least weight with you in an affair of that nature; nevertheless, they are not totally to be despised. His person, his good breeding and address, are uncommonly prepossessing; nor, as far as I can learn, are his morals (which are what I trust you would be most solicitous about) any way faulty. I will endeavour to be just to his merit: self ought in such a case.——In fine, my dear Mariana, convinced that you had carried your grateful regard for me too far, I have taken the liberty to repair the damages I had innocently caused, and to set your lover's heart at rest, by explaining, as far as I judged necessary, the

the reason of your conduct. He is now all impatience, to pour out the fulness of his enamour'd heart at your feet. Need I say, that lady Jones is greatly in his interest? your respectable father, a little inconsiderately, left your fortune, on condition, that you marry with her approbation: happily she approves your choice, though that fortune is too small to be any object with those who address you: nor is there a man so mercenary, who could, I should think, ballance a moment, whether or not they would take miss Melmoth without any fortune at all. Adieu! my charming friend; may all happiness attend you, is the ardent wish of your

W. MELVIN.

Think, Nancy, how my enemy has entangled me in her snare. How shall I escape? How undeceive Sir William,

H 2

without

without coming to an explanation? Heavens! I would sooner die. No, let him never know my weakness; let what will betide me, spare me at least a mortification, the very thoughts of which overwhelms me with confusion. Ah! Nancy, is it not too visible, that he never once dreamt of me, in the light which my silly heart—O! how I am humbled. But let me tell you, what I have done in this perplexing affair. I have wrote to Sir William, the copy I inclose for your perusal; 'tis but a few lines, yet hardly could my trembling hand render them legible.---You will find, that I have made it my earnest request, to be permitted to pay you a visit. He will not, he can have no motive to refuse. I shall then again return to rural scenes of calm felicity! I shall again return to that dear mansion of peace, and contentment, where I have tasted such unmixed delight.

Give



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Give orders, my Nancy ; let my small,  
but elegant bed-chamber be prepared.  
Stand ready in your cool and spacious  
hall with extended arms. Hark when  
you hear a carriage ! 'Tis I, 'tis your  
Mariana ! O let me fly to receive your  
fond embrace ! enchanting dream of  
bliss ! how it has sooth'd my mind !  
Adieu ! ever yours,

M. M.

The Billet inclosed.

Miss MELMOTH to Sir WILLIAM.

Dear and Honoured Sir,

**Y**OU are deceived. I never did,  
I never can think of Mr. Craven  
as a husband. Attribute not this to in-  
constancy, to caprice. Lady Jones is  
my enemy ; but I will so far be mistress  
of my own actions, if I must not marry  
without her consent, so neither will I  
H. 3 marry

marry without my own. Her presence here, sir, I must take the liberty to say, renders this once delightful mansion disagreeable to me, especially as my amiable friend and protectress, Mrs. Melvin is absent. I therefore intreat your permission to return for a few months to Sudley Farm, to which I am warmly solicited by my aunt and cousins. Do me the favour, dear sir, to give immediate orders for my journey ; and add to this favour, by not shewing this note to my mother-in-law. I am, Sir, with gratitude, and the utmost respect, your infinitely obliged

M A R I A N A M E L M O T H .

L E T -

## L E T T E R XXI.

Mr. CRAVEN to Mr. WARRENDER.

WE have formed. That is, my confederate in mischief, lady Jones, and I have planned one of the most joyous plots in nature. The sweet fly by endeavouring to escape, has entangled herself the stronger in the web. She is at this moment preparing for a journey to her uncle's. We have convinced Sir William, who has no suspicions of her partiality for him, (for so fine a fellow, and a fellow who has seen so much of life, I never knew one have so little vanity,) we have convinced him, I say, that pretty miss is only playing off a few maidenly airs : I have even gone so far as to tell him, that

none knows so well as I the cause of her seeming caprice ; that I had unfortunately, though unintentionally offended her : but added with a smile, that I did not despair of obtaining her forgiveness. So far so well. Our next point was to gain his consent, to be of the party in her journey ; which we have planned, and shall execute in spite of all her remonstrances.

To-morrow morning we set off, viz, lady Susan, lady Jones, miss Melmoth, miss Jones, my beloved Abigail, Sir William, and your humble servant.

How my heart flutters at the thoughts of what will (if fortune does not play me some unlucky prank) be the consequence ?——Mum : Not a word, my good inquisitive friend, 'till I am crowned with success. Adieu ! Yours,

CRAVEN.

L E T-



## L E T T E R XXII.

Mr. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

LIVINGSTON is gone, and with much importunity has prevailed on to leave his daughter. Lady Christy, who is good nature itself, made the request in the name of us all, but at her brother's desire; he warmly joined her; the other ladies were not quite so pressing. She is too lovely not to excite some share of envy in the breast of her cousin; and as to lady Margaret, she wishes her gone, both on lord W—'s account and mine; not willing that she should make any impression on either: for her nephew she has bespoke a rich heiress, and for your

H 5

friend,

friend, (judging me sufficiently rich,) she kindly projects for me, one of her nieces.

The girls have (as is the custom here) but very little portion, except their birth and beauty ; which circumstance induces the good aunt to overlook the difference of our faith. Perhaps, indeed, she does not despair of converting me, both into a husband and a bon Catholic. It must be owned, she has shewn some wisdom in the choice of the instrument she employs for that purpose ; that is, the soft and persuasive eloquence of my Jessy, with whom she often contrives to engage me in the dispute on the subject : and certainly the dear girl has more to say in defence of her extravagant faith, than any of that sect I have met with. She has read much, not only of history, but also divinity ; a study little suited to the taste

taste of women in general. Some of our best poets too are highly in favour with her; but she never could bestow the least attention on novels and romances: so much the worse for me, since to the want of a relish for them, I have reason to attribute her prudence, her cool philosophy. She has bestowed so much pains in cultivating her reason, that it has totally restrained the progress of her imagination, and prevents those romantick flights of fancy, which are so favourable to a lover. She sees things as they really are; and I can as little persuade her that she is an angel, as that I am a hero of romance. This girl, George, will be a rational companion, when capricious love, violent but short-lived, has taken its flight. Adieu! I long to have an explanation of your last.

O. W.

LET-

## LETTER XXIII.

Miss LIVINGSTON, to Madam De  
BEAUMONT, at Paris.

**N**O, my estimable friend, I do not forget you. Gratitude has too strongly engraved on my heart the image of her who has loaded me with obligations, never to be effaced. You did me justice, in believing that I certainly had wrote, but that my letters had miscarried : that they miscarried, is owing to my having intrusted them to private hands. My first packet is travelling about with captain Stuart, who, I find, has not yet left England : the other, I presume, is in the like situation, under the protection of Mr. Frazer.

Thus



Thus having vindicated myself from the appearance of neglect and ingratitude, I may proceed to give my dear Mrs. Beaumont some account of my present situation.

You knew my cousin, lord W—— at Paris? I am now at his castle in the North, and have been here ever since my arrival in Scotland. *Apropos*, of Scotland I have the pleasure to inform you, that I was very agreeably disappointed; it had been represented to me as a perfect desert, and the manners of the people, in this part of it, as that of savages, if compared with the fantastical foppery of Frenchmen [Pardon me]. Indeed they may be justly deemed a little deficient in the *etiquette* of good breeding, but to me their native unceremonious politeness, which flows from the heart, is a thousand times more engaging. I must say, however,

ever, that I am in general better pleased with the behaviour of the beaux, than the belles of this part of the world : the former are manly, sensible, and often lively, particularly if they have traveled, and by that means conquer'd their native bashfulness ; then they, more frequently than the English, I think, bring home that proper degree of ease, that just medium between the coxcomb and clown, which constitutes the Fine Gentleman. But for the ladies ; not having the advantage of seeing foreign manners, they are too inattentive to the refining their own ; they are not so delicately feminine as I could wish. Their frankness borders upon effrontery, their vivacity on a sort of hoydening rompishness ; from nature they receive good understanding, but they do not take much pains to cultivate it. They laugh loud, move with a masculine air, and have, I think, in general, more  
harsh

harsh rough voices, than the females of the south : their music is much to my taste ; the soft airs are truly plaintive, and the lively ones no less chearful : yet though they compose well, and have several masterly performers, they have very few good fingers : perhaps it may be owing to their beginning in a very high key, and exerting the voice to the utmost pitch. My cousins, for example, the ladies Violet and Christy, make the house resound from morning to night, with some joyous ballad or other, which they chant forth with all their might. They are remarkably good-natured, free and easy in their manner ; and yet, though this takes off all restraint, I own I never found myself so much at a loss for conversation as in their company. They laugh at sentiment, or rather know not the meaning of the word ; have an aversion to work, and are still less fond of reading. Dancing,  
finging,

singing, long and fatiguing walks for hours, employ them at mid-day: but I have neither strength of constitution, nor spirits to follow their lead; so that I much oftener find myself in company of the gentlemen than the ladies of our party. These young ladies are first-rate toasts in this part of the country. Violet resembles her brother; like him she has large, very light, and rather unmeaning blue eyes; light hair inclined to red, with a high blooming complexion, fair but freckled; so that, except the not being pitted with the small-pox, you find she must, by this description, be very much like his lordship.

Christy, her younger sister, is tall and strong built, has dark eyes and hair, and has, in my opinion, both a handsomer and more expressive countenance than lady Violet: but if they had not half so many charms, they would



would nevertheless be ranked in the number of beauties, because birth here can each defect supply. Servile homage is here paid to that accidental distinction. The men are much more ambitious than either amorous or mercenary : to match into a good family is their principal care, no matter whether the lady be handsome or ugly. You find, my dear madam, that I speak with great freedom of my country. I was indeed born here, but I left it too young to have imbibed any prejudice either for or against it. My father, worthy man, has enough for both ; he is a perfect enthusiast in that respect, and, I really believe, hardly thinks there is either honesty or loyalty to be found in any other place. In this, lady Margaret, lord W—'s aunt, and he exactly agree.

This lady is a spinster of about fifty ; tall and masculine in her manner, and

no.

no less so in her conversation. Farming and politicks are her favourite subjects : she is an excellent manager ; has a good natural understanding, which she has cultivated by studying the Church Catechism, Allan Ramsy, and the Gazette : the rest of her leisure hours are spent at the wheel. If I had not already swelled my epistle, I would have taken the liberty to have introduced to you a very handsome, and accomplished beau, the honourable Orlando Warrender, second son to the earl of Brandon, perhaps you may remember to have seen him at Paris : 'tis certain, if you ever saw him, he is not an object to be soon forgot, since he is one of the most elegantly striking figures in the world : every body must acknowledge, that his face and person are faultless ; as to his mind, 'tis not so easy to form a judgment : he appears lively and enterprising, yet can on occasion reason

with

with all the coolness of a philosopher. I know nothing of his morals; but in his conversation, though spirited, he never transgresses the strictest rules of politeness and decorum. Pity so amiable a man should be a heretick; pity indeed, that any one should be so. May heaven compassionate invincible ignorance.

Adieu! my beloved friend. I am  
yours most sincerely.

JESSY LIVINGSTON.

LET

## LETTER XXIV.

MR. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

**N**O explanation of your last yet arrived. I have all this time, to no purpose, been keeping myself prepared to congratulate you on the success of your project. What the duce are you about? you take as much time and trouble to gain (no great gain) yourself a wife, as I do to purchase a mistress; and that without half my obstacles, which seem daily to multiply, so that I hardly know which to begin with. Again, you cry, Why what have you been doing all this while? As much, take my word, friend, as any one could have done in the time, considering the person I have to deal with: consider, George, she is none of your modish belles, who, like



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like too ripe fruit, are ready to drop into  
one's mouth.

The fruit that will fall without shaking

Is ten times too mellow for me.

I forgot the fine family which a favourite poet makes use of to illustrate his fair-one's chastity ; but I know that it may, without hyperbole, be applied to my Jeffy : yet so far have I thawed her icy heart, that she now flushes at my approach, and involuntarily adopts my sentiments and phrases : nay I have now and then observed her to stifle a half-breathed sigh, when her lovely eyes have met mine. She sings my favourite songs too, and is never so lively in the dance, as when Orlando has the honour of her hand. When we ramble in the woods, she insensibly quits the arm of her female companion, and finds herself at my side. She shuns  
lord

lord W——as much as she seeks me. I believe, however, the dear girl knows not yet the cause herself that tempts her to pay me those little distinctions. For my part, I am so much of honest Tristram's opinion, in regard to making love, that I have never once ventured to breathe my passion ; nor shall I, till I see such an explanation is wished for : till then it would only alarm, and put her on her guard. No, I take a much more likely method to succeed : I do not talk, but act. I study to render myself agreeable, to gain her esteem, to please by my respectful assiduity, which however appears natural and unstudied. A woman like her is not to be won by the common forms of courtship ; her sentiments are too delicately refined ; flattery and adulation will not pass : I see that by W——'s bad success, who by his behaviour has intirely lost her favour. He  
torments

torments her ; she flies to me for relief from his importunities. The man is absolutely so much smitten, that I really believe, he will ere long make her serious proposals. Lady Margaret is greatly alarmed on that head ; but she has no right to controul him : 'tis now more than ever visible, that she watches for a decent pretext to get rid of her lovely guest ; but as the time fixed for her stay was a month at least, I don't see how she can get off, especially as Jeffy is to wait till her father returns to be her escort. Adieu ! W— sends to beg I will take a morning ride with him, as he wants to shew me some late improvements which he has made in a distant part of his estate.

I am your's,

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

## L E T T E R XXV.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

**T**IS past : my gaudy dreams of  
bliss, my plans of happiness,  
are fled for ever. Ah ! never, never  
more will your Mariana now return to  
you in peace : Alas ! no : her peace is  
lost, and not a dawn of hope remains ;  
those cheering hopes, which but last  
Monday gladdened my heart, and made  
the smiling face of nature still more  
gay. O why rose the day so bright ?  
a day destin'd to a work of so much  
darkness. Nancy, my dear kind Nancy,  
in what language shall I describe ? 'tis  
not to be recalled. Ah ! was I not to  
blame ? but the surprise, the dreadful  
surprise !—perhaps it was most prudent,  
for every way I was lost. Is it possible  
that



that I should ever be reconciled to my fate? Will a few words, however sacred, change the feelings of the heart? By the strength of my reason, by the help of maidenly pride, and by accustoming myself to moderate my wishes, I kept a dawning passion within bounds, and am convinced, that absence, and a few struggles more, would have wholly restored me to freedom. But will reason, will prudence, will a sense of my duty enable me to love, honour and obey (the last is easy) a man, who 'till now I have rather beheld with disesteem, and a degree of antipathy? Assist me, heaven! for difficult as the task is, I now must try.—Would you believe it, my Nancy? can I believe it myself? my heart dies within me at the thought. I am married, trepanned into a marriage: so wild a scheme, and yet alas! so successful. But take a concise narrative of the dreadful affair.

VOL. I.

I

I told

I told you in my last, that I had solicited leave to return to my beloved Sudly. Sir William yielded to my request, perhaps more readily than I could have wished. I have since discovered, that my enemies had given him a strange account of my motives for wishing to go. How was it possible, an ignorant country girl like me, should escape a snare so cunningly laid to entrap me? Never were two heads better calculated to assist each other, in any iniquitous plot, than that of lady Jones and—Ah! of whom am I going to speak so disrespectfully: Alas! I had forgot.

Ann, with joyful dispatch prepared every thing for my journey. I neither expected nor wished for any other companion but her. I cannot express how vexed I was, when at supper my cruel step-mother proposed at least to accompany me to \* \* \*, as I must pass the  
night

night there ; and for that reason she thought it highly improper that I should go alone. Sir William was quite of her opinion. O then (cry'd lady Susan) let's make a pleasurable party of it : Craven and I will go in his phaeton, (I was glad she had at least disposed of him,) and you four (meaning lady Jones, her daughter, Sir William, and me) may go in the coach. My worthy and respectable Mrs. Melvin, observe, was not then returned from her melancholy visit to a sick relation : ah ! would she had, perhaps I might, by her prudence and penetration, have escaped the fatal snare. I could not, consistent with politeness, object to their plan. Accordingly we next morning set off. Ann with my trunks and boxes was to go in a hired chaise ; in which, when my companions left me, I was to proceed the rest of my journey.

We reached the fatal Inn about eight in the evening. The day upon the whole had passed tolerably, though my weak heart now and then felt a little painful sensation, when I look'd forward to my approaching separation, from one of the most amiable of friends and guardians. We ladies, after tea, went to chuse our bed-chambers. Miss Jones, on her mother's giving her the hint, offered to take a share of mine : the worthy girl, I am convinced, had no view in making this offer, but that which she obligingly expressed, viz. that she might, as long as possible, enjoy my company. I received her offer with the worse grace however, because it first came from lady Jones, though she only said in a careless way, As here are no great plenty of good beds, I think you two girls had better lye together : a hint at which her unsuspecting

good-



good-humoured daughter eagerly caught: so that I had no pretence to get off, nor could I well tell at the time, why I should wish it. Ann had ever since I left my Nancy supplied her place, nor did I like to change. We returned to the parlour; Mr. Craven's behaviour to me was artfully calculated to prepare the rest of the company for the conclusion of his cruel plot. I caught him once or twice, when I had repulsed his (what he thought tender) assiduity, wink at Sir William, who in return forced a faint smile, a sort of melancholy smile I now recollect it was: O perhaps—but these hopes now come too late, and only serve to aggravate my misfortunes. Miss Jones, very soon after supper, began to yawn, and could hardly keep her eyes open. Lady Susan rallied her with great spirit on the occasion, but the other was so drowsy, that not a spark of her native vivacity was awake

to retort it. I now make no doubt, but something had been given her to produce that effect. She made a yawning apology, and summoning her mother's maid, wish'd us good night. I would have accompanied her, but the rest of the party so strongly opposed it, that I was in a manner compelled to stay. We sat up late. There is no prevailing on lady Susan to keep decent hours. At last, however, candles were ordered ; I called for Ann : Lady Jones would drag me into lady Susan's room, where they kept me chatting 'till I was half asleep : she then officiously attended me to my own, Ann carrying lights. The door was gently opened by her woman : Softly, pray ladies, (said she in a whisper) my poor young lady is but just fallen asleep. Such a dreadful tooth-ach !—I'll undress your mistress, Ann ; I would not for the world, that miss Jones should be waked. On this, Go  
with

## FINE-GENTLEMAN. 175

with me then, (cry'd my artful step-mother to Ann,) you may supply to me the place of Hannah for this night. Good rest to you, my dear. So saying, she shut the door upon me. I expeditiously threw off my cloaths, and without speaking to my new attendant, stole into bed. Miss Jones lay with her face to the wall, and her head muffled up. O gracious heaven, how little did I suspect!—most effectually had they intangled me in their snare! how sound, how peaceful slept the unsuspecting victim: but ah! when, when will she again sleep in peace.

In the morning I was suddenly awakened by the sound of instruments under my window. I listened resting on my elbow, when I distinctly heard, 'God bless your honour, and your fair bride! may you live long and happy.' They had hardly spoke this, when

open flew my chamber door, and arm in arm rush'd lady Jones, and lady Susan, laughing ! your servant has play'd you a fine trick, Craven, (cry'd the former,) he got drunk last night, and then told the whole inn of your private marriage. I thought her mad at least. I sat up, the curtain held back with one hand, the other extended in an attitude of astonishment. But what, ah ! what became of me, when the pretended Miss Jones, affecting to start from sleep, sat up and discovered (his head being unmuffled) the imposition that had been put upon me ; discovered himself to be the detested Craven ! Sir William at that moment, seiz'd hold of by lady Susan, look'd in : See there, see there, exclaimed she, the wrangling lovers converted into peaceable man and wife. I uttered a loud scream as soon as I a little recovered from an astonishment and horror that had struck

me



me speechless, and clasping my hands shriek'd out, No wife, no wife! O ruin! misery! despair! The last word died unfinished on my faltering tongue, and I fell into a strong fit. When they had by repeated trials, (for I must have very long continued insensible) recovered, or rather restored me to misery, I found the wretch (Craven I mean, forgive me heaven for calling him so) up and dress'd. Sir William hung over me with a look of tender distress. I must again repeat it, cry'd the former, that you lady Jones, knowing my charmer's delicacy was much to blame, to chuse such a time for your congratulation; especially as my love had made a point of it with me to conceal our marriage, till time, and the presence of her friends at Sudley, had given her a little courage. You know I told you all this. I had several times attempted, with

L 5.

bursting

bursting indignation, to interrupt him ; but my tongue refused to do its office. I had not strength, I had not power : God knows whether or no, they had given me any thing to produce this effect, amongst my other medicine : but 'tis certain, however strange it may seem, I felt all my senses benumb'd ; and though I could both hear and see, was actually in a kind of doze, such as is produced by laudanum. Being thus rendered passive, they placed my languid and unresisting head on the pillow, and drawing the curtains, made poor Ann, who was drowned in tears, seat herself by the bed-side, and then they all, saying I stood in need of rest, softly left the room. Part of this I saw, but saw it without either emotion, or the least sense of my situation ; so thoroughly was I stupified. From Ann I afterwards received a more particular account.

Adieu !

Adieu! for the present, my beloved Nancy, you shall have, soon have, the rest of my melancholy tale.

M. M.

L E T-

## LETTER XXVI.

Mr. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

**T**HE improvements that lord Mc. Aimore has made on his estate, are absolutely astonishing ; his tenants chearfully promote his plans, because, though he has raised their rents, yet has he confined himself within the bounds of moderation. He allows them to enjoy, in a just proportion, the fruits of their labour.

The face of this country is surprisingly changed within these few years, since agriculture has been encouraged. I hear every day a dissertation on the subject of farming ; 'tis one of his lordship's favourite topicks : I am become  
wonderful



wonderful knowing in these matters : even the ladies here enter into the spirit of it. Lady Margaret, in particular, shines in that way. We had yesterday a visit from Sir Richard Wivile, who is making a tour of the Highlands; a thorough cockney, who has never before been ten miles distant from the metropolis ! He affects to make remarks on architecture, gardening, painting, &c. Curious ones they are. Mc. Aimore's feat attracted his attention, and induced him to desire leave to see it. The family received him with that friendly hospitality, for which the inhabitants of this country are justly famed : the great booby stares at every thing, *avec de grand yeu*, and renders himself truly ridiculous, by a pretention to taste. We were this morning walking over lord M—'s grounds, attended by one of his farmers, when our spark expressed his astonishment, to see the fields covered  
with

with stones, and attempted to say something witty on the occasion : Yes, (cry'd the arch farmer,) we have plenty of stones as ye say, it cost us a great deal of trouble to scatter them as you see. Scatter them, (exclaimed the wiseacre,) heavens ! do you put them there on purpose ? Master, (return'd the farmer) do ye think they grow there ? 'tis our Scots manure ; we put them on our ground to keep it warm. Warm ! (resumed the other) I protest I thought they had come there by chance : but, to be sure, as you say, stones do not grow ; I might have recollected that. You, Craven, will hardly believe, that what the farmer said has some truth in it. A gentleman in this neighbourhood made the experiment ; he was at the expence of having his land weeded of the stones, if I may so call it ; and, after all this trouble, his ground produced a worse crop than ever he had known, though  
it

FINE-GENTLEMAN. 183

it was a remarkably fruitful season. The case was, that his crops were premature, and sprung up before the weather was favourable ; for the harvest here is later than in the south, as you may sagely suppose.

What very much delights me, and presents a pleasing and picturesque prospect, is to see the husbandman plowing the sides of steep mountains up, which I should scarce be able to climb, even with the greatest circumspection ; yet these fellows whistle away, and trudge along with as much composure, as if they had no neck to break : their horses too, climb like goats ; they seem formed by nature on purpose for the country where they are bred. I have very little use for those I brought with me from England.

Adieu !

Adieu ! We are going to shew Wivile a most beautiful cascade at about two miles distance. The ladies are to be of our party ; their pads are at the gate. Jessy looks up at my window. Lovely nymph ! dost thou wait for the assistance of thy Orlando ? I come, I fly : the dear girl is handsome as an angel, in her riding-dress. Christy too ! ah ! she wants no help : you are distanced. Wivile ; see she vaults into her seat.

Your's,

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

L E T



## L E T T E R XXVII.

Miss MELMOTH to Miss PEMBROKE.

Melvin-Abbey.

**O**NCE more I resume my melancholy tale ! In that state of dozing insensibility, I continued half the day ; during which Craven, and his vile associate, often seemed to glide across the room. I find they were actually often in and out : the former paid those visits, that he might carry on the farce of a fond bridegroom : Ah ! they had sufficient leisure to establish the belief of their artful falsehoods.

At last I came to myself, the dose ceased to operate, its strength being exhausted : I raised my head, look'd down

down and faintly sigh'd, "is it you Ann?" The affectionate girl rose and knelt by the bed-side, putting my hand to her lips: O madam, (cry'd she) what is the meaning of all this? I know not, my good creature, (return'd I) but I have had most frightful dreams. Alas! I fear 'tis more than a dream, (resumed she) but is it possible you should really be married to Mr. Craven, madam? No, Ann, (cry'd I with fervour) I call heaven and earth to witness, that I am not. Well then, madam, (said she) there never to be sure was such a deep-lay'd plot. His servants declared before twenty people last night in the kitchen, that you were married one day last week by a special licence; and that he was present as a witness: and then, his master being found where he was found this morning. —

The

The girl blushed, paused, then went on ; After such a scene, so publick, O my beloved young lady ! what can you do but marry him ? he has too artfully entangled you in his toils, to leave you a possibility of an escape.

And do you think that I will ever consent to be accessary to so detestable a plot ? Do you think I will ever consent to be his ? (interrupted I, passionately).

Ann shook her head. O ! my dear madam, on a little cool reflection your usual prudence will get the better of your just resentment : for, according to my weak judgment, I see not what you can do after such a fatal adventure, but suffer people to continue in their error ; and, to be sure, though Mr. Craven was not the man of your choice, he is every way —

Is it from you, Ann, (again interrupted I) that I am to hear all this? are you too leagued with my enemy? She burst into tears. I would die first, (cry'd she mournfully) but the wound it will give to your hitherto unfulfilled reputation---She stopp'd, for at that moment Sir William entered the room.

How is my sweet Ward? (cry'd he, approaching the bed) I thought to have found Mr. Craven here. As he has, I find, pass'd most of the day with you, I hope he has calm'd your mind, and talk'd you out of your too timorous delicacy. O fir, cry'd I, clasping my hands and bursting into tears, how shall I undeceive you? how prevail on you to give credit to my single testimony against so many who will obstinately contradict it.

I had



I had hardly finished this sentence, ere Mr. Craven, who I suppose kept on the watch, made his appearance. Sir, Mr. Craven, (went I on) I ask you, and I call upon you as a man of honour to answer me truly. I will check my just resentment. Say, (repeated I), answer me; am I your wife? Can my Mariana ask such a question after what is passed? (cry'd he) would she not wish to be thought my wife, even if she were not? But what, my life (added he, attempting to take my hand) can induce you to continue your strange caprice? I shook my head,---Ah! hardened and unblushing!---But I will not call names, (continued I, checking my rage): remember however, that I will, while I have breath, declare that I neither am, or ever will be yours.

This

This is astonishing ! (cry'd Sir William : will you, Mr. Craven, give me leave to speak to her without witnesses ? I never knew Miss Melmoth guilty of caprice, and on such an occasion in particular, it would be so childish, so inconsistent with her prudence and good sense, that I own my mind is not free from uneasy doubts, and suspicions.

Think as you please, Sir William, interrupted Mr. Craven with a fierce air : your known partiality for the lady may bias your judgment ; but I think, if you was her true friend, whatever doubts you might privately entertain, yet after having been witness to the very familiar manner in which we were caught this morning, I should think your chief care would be to prevent others from entertaining any. I am  
not

not one, sir, who am necessitated to plot for a wife : both by birth and fortune, the world will, I fancy, deem me at least equal to miss Melmoth, though I think her merit, and beauty above all price : but, in two words, I can prove the marriage, can produce the witnesses. Lady Jones for one was present.

I raised my hands and eyes in astonishment ; Good heavens ! thought I, 'tis impossible for me to contend with people who will stick at no falsehood to carry on their project, and I shall at last be compelled to yield. Ah ! then, in prudence let me beware, lest I too much exasperate a man, who may one day have it in his power to take ample vengeance.

This reflection intimidated me. I resolved to proceed no farther in vindicating the truth, without the advice of  
my

my friends, of Mrs. Melvin in particular.

Is it possible! will my Nancy exclaim, could you even for a moment, entertain a thought of suffering your enemies to triumph? of being the wife of a man capable of such detestable falsehoods: falsehoods of all others the meanest vice?

Alas! my sweet friend, you do not consider to what a situation I was reduced: exposed in the most shocking manner; publicly exposed at an inn; of two evils, that of being thought married was certainly the least: for ah! should I evermore, innocent as I was, be able to hold up my head, after such a fatal adventure? a few of those who know me thoroughly might indeed credit my story, and acquit: but would the world in general, ever prone to scandle, believe



lieve so wild, so, to appearance, improbable a story, as that any man should fall on such a scheme to get a wife.

The more I reasoned, the more prudence call'd upon me to exert my patience, my fortitude, and quietly to resign myself to my fate. I could not at any rate hope for happiness ; my heart was not form'd to have its wishes gratified : why struggle against heaven's will though unscrutable decrees ? I begg'd that Sir William would immediately give orders for my return to the Abbey, as I wish'd to consult with his sister what was fit for me to do. I added, that I chose to go in the chaise with Anne, with whom I could most at my ease indulge my melancholy reflections.

We accordingly all set out, and reach'd that once to me delightful abode the same night. Fortunately Mrs. Melvin

was come home, but being fatigued with her journey was gone to rest : this determined me to seek the same repose, accompanied by Anne. The vile Craven objected to this, pretending to claim his right ; but on lady Jones's interposing, he affected to make a merit of yielding to my will.

You may believe I enjoyed but little rest : ah ! no, I never once closed my eyes ; so that, half feverish, I rose at day-break, and went into the garden ; to my surprise I there met Sir William. As he advanced to meet me, I took a sudden resolution to unfold to him all the artifices that had been used from the first of my being sent for to hear the proposals he had to make to me from Mr. Craven. I had even determined to tell him, that they had by their wilful ambiguity, led me into a mistake as to the

the person, which caused my seeming approbation of the proposed addresses.

All this I had resolved, the necessity of the case having vanquished my delicate scruples : so that, after our first salutation was over, I led to a seat, saying, I had something of importance to communicate, and therefore was desirous to seize the present favourable opportunity. He made no answer, but bowing, took my hand and led me to an alcove ; there he placed himself by me, his fine compassionate eyes fixed on my face, my hand still clasp'd between both his, he in an attitude of obliging attention, I all blushing, agitated, and so confused that I had not power to articulate a syllable.

What a silly figure must I have made? I doubt not but he must have guessed the cause of my emotions : alas ! perhaps it had been better for us both, had he sooner discovered the secret ; now it was too, too late.

K 2

While

While your poor friend hesitated, stammered, and almost gasped for breath, not knowing what to say first, Craven suddenly made his appearance : he look'd in, he started, and stepping two paces back, Now (cry'd he, in a rage) the mystery is fully explained ; this is what I have been told, but what my weak intoxicated heart refused to believe. Sir William, (continued he) you have injured me in the tenderest point ! you encouraged my addresses to that false one, and she, no less artful, drew me into a private marriage : I as a convenient cloak was chosen as a husband, while you continued her happy gallant. You cannot suppose, (added he) that I will calmly put up with such insults. No, I instantly demand satisfaction. Here are two swords, which, having received intimation of your assignation, I brought with me. Take one, sir, my injured honour will not brook delay.

O ! (cry'd



O! (cry'd I terrified to death, and throwing myself at his feet,) let me be the victim of your revenge, since we are equally innocent : spare his precious life, for the good of society spare it, and take mine, which is worthless both to myself and others ; a life of which I am weary.

Sir William hasten'd to raise me. Appearances, madam, might justify in some measure, those suspicions which have been infused into Mr. Craven's mind. I am not so very a drawcanfir, as to fight merely for the sake of fighting ; but no one shall insult me with impunity : both your conduct, and that of Mr. Craven, has through this whole affair been so extremely mysterious, that I know not what to think.

But I do full well know, both what to think, and how to act, hastily interrupted the other. Chuse your weapon,

fir, I once more repeat, for nothing but your blood can wash out the stain you have cast on my honour.

Sir William took the fatal instrument of destruction ; they put themselves in a posture to engage. I clasped my hands half frantick, and screamed for help with all my force. No one heard ! quick as lightning the swords were unsheathed, and pointed at each other's breast. I rushed between ; stop, stop, (cry'd I wildly) let me be the victim. O hold, savage and ungenerous Craven ; you know that Sir William has never injured you : stop, if it will satisfy your cruelty, I consent to be what you have falsely said I already am. I consent to be your wretched wife.

Not if you are not so, shall you ever be terrified into an union to which I have reason to believe you so averse (exclaimed the generous Sir William). This

is

is too much, (interrupted the furious and incensed Craven ;) Does her fate then so wholly depend on your will and pleasure ? No more trifling then, (continued he) her mediation, the danger to which she exposes herself, shall not preserve you from my just vengeance. So saying, he made a furious pass ; and, though I continued between them, wounded him over my head, in the shoulder, from which the blood gushed out in a stream.

Terrify'd ! distracted at his danger, I, hardly knowing what I said, shriek'd out, I am your wife, Craven ! any thing ; O ! stop, stop.

If he is really your husband, Mariana, (cry'd Sir William, always cool, and always master of himself) if you are his wife, you have been exceedingly to

blame, and I cannot wonder at Mr. Craven's conduct.

O! sir, (resumed I weeping) think of me as you please, only desist from your fatal purpose, Mr. Craven will hear reason.

He threw away his sword. I love you to madness, (exclaimed he) you too well know your power; let what is passed be buried in oblivion. You have at length, confessed the truth: perhaps I did wrong to break the oath you extorted from me, that, for one month at least, our marriage should remain a secret; but I saw not the necessity for that concealment. Why then did you, by your obstinacy, so cruelly and so long punish me for its breach. Sir William, (continued he, turning to him, and offering his hand) I may perhaps have injured you by unjust suspicions,



cions, but Mariana's strange conduct almost drove me to madness, and excited a thousand fears. She now is brought to hear reason : she acknowledges herself my wife ; let me also be honoured with the return of your friendship.

I, while he thus harrangued, stagger'd to a seat, and clasping my hands, sigh'd out, ' His Wife ! ' and fell back senseless. In that condition I was conveyed to the house. Sir William's wound was bound up by Craven ; and privately examined by a surgeon, who declared it to be too slight to excite the least apprehension of danger.

When I recovered, and found myself in my apartment, I instantly sent Anne, to desire Mrs. Melvin would come to me. She came, and after indulging a violent burst of tears, which a little relieved me, I related every particular of

my unhappy adventure, without even omitting my partiality for Sir William, which had led me into so fatal an error.

When I had finished my tale of woe, I asked her advice in what manner she judged it proper for me to act? After what has passed, (returned she) after having acknowledged Mr. Craven for your husband, after its having been so publicly reported that you are his wife, I see not what you can do but become so in earnest; for, if you do not, your character will be irretrievably lost: and though he has taken most strange, most unjustifiable methods to accomplish his wishes, yet will we not be so uncharitable as to judge of his general conduct by that part of it, when he was under the influence of a mad ungovernable passion.

I never,

I never, though I have enquired on discovering his partiality for you, heard any thing more exceptionable of his morals, than one must expect to hear of every young man of fashion, now in this age of luxury and dissipation. Then he is a remarkably personable man, a circumstance that generally has but too much weight with girls of your age. And as to his family and fortune, they are both above your hopes. In short, my dear child, (added she, kissing a tear off my cheek) there appears to me to be no other remedy than what I have prescribed. Exert your usual meek fortitude on this occasion ; few are so fortunate as to be wedded to the man of their choice, (she sigh'd deeply on saying this) by a prudent and virtuous conduct, you will secure the continuance of Mr. Craven's affection ; and his love will in time create in you a mutual regard.

Adieu !

Adieu ! my dear Nancy, I am so fatigued both in body and mind, that the pen is ready to drop from my fingers. In every change, under every affliction, I am unchangeably

Your's,

MARIANA.

Alas ! I know not what fir-name to sign.

LET-



## L E T T E R XXVIII.

In Continuation.

**T**HE post is going out. You will be impatient to know the conclusion of my sad history. Weak as I am, I will therefore add a few lines.

Next morning, at Mrs. Melvin's request, after she had had a private conference with Mr. Craven, I at six o'clock set off, attendend by her and my maid, to the church ; where we met Mr. Craven, who waited with the clergyman to perform the ceremony.

I was more than half dead the whole time. Mrs. Melvin whisper'd me, Recollect yourself, Mariana ; 'tis passed : submit with a good grace to your fate.

You

You have entered into an engagement of all others the most sacred : remember he is your husband. I sigh'd, wept, and listen'd in silence.

To-morrow we are to set off for Craven-Hall. I am ill. I shall never be myself again. Nancy, my dear Nancy, will you not come and comfort me, if my beloved aunt can spare you ? Adieu ! adieu. I must seek repose. Sick, very sick.

Your's,

M. C.

LET-

## L E T T E R XXIX.

MR. WARRENDER to Mr. CRAVEN.

**Y**OUR's was indeed a bold stroke for a wife, George. So you have her at last secure. I wonder you thought it worth your while to take so much pains. But, remarkable for obstinacy and stratagems, you ever had a plotting head, and liked no adventure that gave you not an opportunity to display your genius for enterprize. By the bye, I am not quite clear but that I must myself have recourse to some such scheme as your's : those shy virtuous girls put us honest fellows confoundedly out of our play.

Jeffy has not one of those convenient tender hearts, that is set on fire by  
every

every spark. But, as all extremes border one on another, I hope her extreme indifference will only yield in my favour, and be followed by extreme sensibility. Never before did I feel my heart so deeply interested in any affair of this nature. I had no turn like you to knight-errantry: But for my Jessy, I could now storm castles, swim rivers, climb rope-ladders, or do any other foolish thing that love and opposition prompt us to. I swear to you, so much am I puzzled how to proceed, that I am tempted to have recourse to the old stale device of a private marriage. In this case I could offer the fair-one a thousand good reasons why it is not in my power to divulge it: such as, the difference of our faith, the obstinacy of her father, the pride of mine, and so forth.

Now



Now if I could but prevail on her to take a good hearty oath, (a terrible bug-bear to a girl of her tender conscience) if I could but get her to swear soundly never to reveal our marriage, without my approbation and consent ; why I should not have the least scruple to oblige her with a few vows and promises in return ; because, you know, it might never chance to suit my conveniency to make it publick ; and if by our then honest endeavours, we should be bless'd with a pledge of our pure love, and the mother should get the better of her scruples ; if, I say, a son and heir should tempt her to violate her sacred engagement to his honest father ; then have I a just pretence to quarrel with her. As thus :

'Tis well, madam ; I see how much you are to be depended on ; if in one point, a point like this, you could forfeit

feit your honour, your vows, I have no reason to place any dependance on you in other respects. You have justly forfeited my esteem; from henceforth our union ceases: I bid you an eternal adieu! Prove your marriage if you can; had you left the disclosure of it to my generosity, to the time when I judged it convenient, you would have saved yourself all trouble in the affair; now I fancy it may chance to cost you some.

In this manner, George, would I with cool indifference, leave her to make the most of a bad bargain: for observe, if I should be compelled to play the fool, I shall take care to have witnesses of my own chusing; a priest too with a short memory, and perhaps a short life: so that I shall not run any great risque of being publicly inlisted amongst the horned cattle.

But

But what means this something like remorse ? Who is it that I am plotting thus to ensnare ? Jessy Livingston ? that amiable, that now happy and unspotted maid ! a maid so virtuous, that I do not believe she would be able to survive the loss of honour. Psha ! how will she know that she has lost it ? give the same action a different name, and silly souls rest satisfied, as if it's name could change it's nature. So my charmer, believing that she is committing matrimony, will set about it with the most notable, the best grace in the world ; though she would die rather than commit simple fornication. O prejudice ! prejudice ! how strong is thy force upon weak minds !

Once more I have set my conscience at rest ; and now I must prepare for some daring enterprize ; there is no time to be lost. Old Livingston is expected

pected on Monday. Lord W— has made me the confidant of his passion, and has absolutely made up his mind to ask the father's consent in form. So much the better. I know the girl has now a fixed antipathy to his lordship: they will drive her to extremity; and then, (glorious thought!) she will fly for shelter into the extended arms of your friend; your happy friend,

ORLANDO WARRENDER.

L. E. T.



## L E T T E R    X X X .

Miss LIVINGSTON, to Miss SANDY's,  
at Paris.

**W**ILL you never return to England, my dear Terresa? Will your mamma never be convinced, that your faith cannot be shaken? arguments, persuasion, even your love for that worthy parent, have failed to move. Ah! my sweet heretick, you are too, too strongly attached to your errors, to leave her any room to hope: Why then will she still detain you abroad? Why refuse herself the society of such a daughter, so every way amiable and accomplished? and why is her charity so much confin'd? for my part, I cannot but wish, nay I am even tempted to believe,

lieve, (contrary as it is to the doctrine I have been taught) that there are good people of all persuasions.

Is not my Terresa good ? is she not pious, virtuous and benevolent ? are not many protestants so ? I have for some time past conversed with one. Ah ! my dear girl, how dangerous is the sophistry of a sensible man, especially when that man is as handsome as sensible ? To my Terresa alone, can I freely unfold the secrets of my heart, but to her only dare I reveal its weakness ; how strangely am I altered ! how difficult a lesson is it to know one's self ! how I used to boast of my happy indifference ! what now is become of it ? I thought myself possessed of some discretion, of some maidenly pride ; ah ! if you knew all my folly ! I was too confident of my own strength, but I am severely punished : I cannot yet tell when or how  
the

the pleasing pain stole on me. I have seen and conversed with a hundred amiable men, without experiencing the slightest emotion ; men too, who exerted their every art to please me, without success. Now 'tis my turn, and as fruitless are my endeavours ; an every way hopeless passion has for ever robb'd me of my peace ; let them no longer say that love cannot exist without hope ; I have not a shadow of hope, and yet, alas ! I love ; yes, I can no longer deceive myself.

I knew not the nature of my malady, till it was too deeply rooted to admit a cure : even despair cannot effect it. The image of Orlando Warrender will never be effaced from my heart, that most lovely, most engaging of men : engaging ! spite of his cold indifference : common civility from him is more attractive, more desirable, than the adoration

ration of all the rest of his sex. Sometimes I am tempted to think he is more than civil ; but not long am I permitted to indulge that pleasing thought : the honour of his friendship is all I aspire to ; who would not wish for such a friend ! he is so universally admired, I have so many fair rivals, that 'tis no wonder he should overlook the humble Jessy : indeed he is not particular to any one, though gracefully polite to all. If he converses more with me than the other ladies of the family, I fear it is because I am forward, and put myself more in his way. Forward ! you cry, the timid Jessy forward ! well may you be surprized ; but alas ! I am not what I was ; reason no longer governs ; an irresistible impulse directs my actions : I involuntarily do a thousand things, for which, on cool reflection, I severely reproach myself : waking restless nights

more restless than the night  
spent



spent in fruitless regret, punish me for the pleasure I experience by day.

I have most unhappily fixed my affections on a man who never can repay them ; on the only man, since my arrival here, whom it was madness to behold with partiality : even lord W—, though so much above me in fortune, I might have stood some chance to please : chance, do I say ? I have actually pleased him but too well for my peace ; he torments me : I foresee much uneasiness, from his passion, amiable, sensible, and accomplished as he is, I never can feel for him any other sentiment but of esteem.

Lady Margaret is visibly alarmed at his attachment to me : she need not : and yet if he should so far conquer his pride as to form serious designs of addressing me ; if he should apply to my

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father ;

father ; I am lost, I shall certainly be driven to some desperate recourse, in order to avoid a match to which I never can consent. Had my heart been free, I might have made a painful sacrifice to my filial duty : I might even have acquitted myself as a wife, with propriety and discretion : I might have lived content, with a man I could respect, though I never should have experienced that fatally pleasing passion, by which my heart is now so totally engrossed ; happy in the continuance of that indifference, the loss of which I have such reason to lament : but now to give my hand to one man, while another so wholly possesses my affections ! it is not to be thought of.

Next Monday my father is expected. My love is pure, it is placed on a worthy object ; that passion, when genuine, is said to refine and ennoble the mind : it

it has depraved mine : a few weeks ago,  
I should have rejoiced at the prospect of  
seeing my parent : now (how I hate my-  
self for a sentiment so unnatural, so un-  
grateful !) I almost dread his arrival.

Adieu ! my dear friend. Do you not  
pity your

JESSY LIVINGSTON ?

L E T.

## L E T T E R XXXI.

Mrs. CRAVEN to Miss NANCY PEM-  
BROKE.

Craven Hall.

**D**ID fortune only favour me with my Nancy's company, that I might the more severely feel the misery of being deprived of such sweet society? But I must not murmur. My dear aunt was infinitely good to spare you so long, to spare you at a time when your presence was so necessary. Alas! my friend, what would have become of me, but for that heart-felt consolation! To be separated from all my connexions, to be carried to a strange place amongst strangers, and that by a man, who, to say no worse, had not intitled himself



himself to my esteem ; far less could I so far command my heart as to compel it to love, though he had forced me to give him a right to all it's affections. I hope in time I shall be enabled to discharge that duty, as well as those which I have already chearfully accustomed myself to ; at least, if I cannot force my ungovernable heart to bestow itself on him, it shall continue lock'd up in my breast, equally inaccessible to all the rest of mankind. I thank heaven not one thought is harboured there, but what I might, without a blush, expose to the most censorious critic. Much am I indebted to the kind guardians and instructors of my youthful mind, for that mastery of my passion which by habit I have acquired ; taught from infancy, wisely taught, to be temperate in all things.

Much am I also obliged to my Nancy, for the friendly pains she took to reconcile me to my fate : nay I believe my sweet girl was serious in her commendations of Mr. Craven : 'tis certain, he never appeared to such advantage, as in her company, and none of his graces or agreeable qualities did you suffer to escape my notice : his fine person, his easy address, his unbounded fondness, his good-humoured vivacity. It must be own'd however, that you made the very most of them ; at least, they do not in your absence so forcibly strike me. Ah ! let me not be ungrateful ! though he would never have been the man of my choice, yet as nothing happens but what is wisely permitted by the Almighty, I ought to regard him as chosen for me by a higher power : and certainly no man ever took more pains than he does at present to make me content with my lot. His  
affiduity

affiduity is unremitted ; but he has not that delicate, that unaffected native tenderness in his disposition that I could wish : when the first fervour of his passion is abated, I fear I shall not find in him what is the principal charm of wedlock, the kind sympathizing friend : he seems not to have a heart endued with a sufficient portion of sensibility, for it to be in unison with mine.

I have another fear, of a still more important nature, and which, as one now interested in his welfare, gives me infinite concern : I mean, the slight sense, even to infidelity, which he entertains of religion. O ! from whence, but from that pure source, can we hope for true morality ? and without morality, what dependence can I place in him ? what, after having gratified his wishes at the expence of so much falsehood, when the novelty is worn off, and

my few charms, by becoming familiar, cease to please ; what tye then have I on him, who, freed from the dread of future punishment, regards this vain world as his all ; and therefore thinks he ought, wisely, to make the most of it ? Ah ! will not such a one laugh at marriage-vows, and think it beneath the dignity of a man of reason to be bound by what was invented by mercenary priests ?

Something of this nature, some of this kind of wit, I last night accidentally over-heard pass between him and some very rakish-looking young men, who yesterday paid him a visit. I was by no means pleased with our guests ; though you may believe I took all prudent care, out of respect to Mr. Craven, who introduced them to me as his friends, to conceal my sentiments. At dinner they absolutely stared me out of  
counte-



countenance, and affected to whisper their pretended admiration of my beauty, forsooth, so very audibly, and in such modishly free expressions, that I was greatly disconcerted.

Adieu ! my beloved ; a visit from your favourites, the miss Minifees, obliges me to lay down my pen.

Your's, ever,

M. CRAVEN.

P. S. Next Monday we expect Sir William, Mrs. Melvin, and lady Susan, who is still their guest. As to my mother-in-law, I owe her no duty ; and she has too manifestly proved her enmity, to deserve the continuance of my least regard. Her worthy daughter I esteem ; and as she is on the point of being separated from her by a marriage,

L 5

from

from which she has a prospect of great felicity ; as she is going to be her own mistress, I say, I shall be happy to continue rank'd in the number of her friends : but for lady Jones, all farther connections between her and me is at an end. She ran the risque of making me wretched, without having any just foundation to hope (no hope but what her foolish vanity suggested) that it would at all further her scheme on Sir William. What a scrawl ! Adieu, my guests have quitted their carriage, and now I must leave you.

L E T.

## L E T T E R XXXII.

MISS LIVINGSTON to MISS SANDYS  
at Paris.

**A**LL that I dreaded is come to pass, and I see nothing before me but scenes of wretchedness. In the midst of all this, fortune, to render my troubles in some measure supportable, has made me mistress of the only man's affections, that ever did or ever will appear valuable to the heart of your Jessy. Yes, my friend; Orlando, the dear, the amiable Orlando, no longer conceals his passion from me; a passion which I find was reciprocal from the first moment we beheld each other.

Delight-

Delightful thought ! let me for a while banish all others, that I may indulge it without alloy. Terresa, my dear Terresa, you knew not the true disposition of your friend : she did not know herself, 'till love awaken'd her feelings and unveil'd the secret recesses of her heart ; that heart long fancy'd so cool, so philosophic, so capable of governing its emotion : O ! how I was deceived. The still voice of reason was lost, prudence in vain remonstrates ; duty, affection, pride, and the virtuous love of fame, of an unblemished conduct, all, all have lost their force, and passion governs me at pleasure : what it will drive me to, heaven knows ; but this I know, that no power on earth shall compel me to give my hand to a man, whom as a husband I regard with horror.

The very next morning after my father's arrival, lord W—— closeted him,  
and



and in form solicited his consent to pay his addressee to me. Joy, gratitude, all that a fond father, ambitious of his daughter's grandeur, could feel, was expressed on the occasion. He flew to me, with what he thought the welcome news. I listen'd, pale, trembling and almost ready to faint. He paused, he fixed his eyes on my face, and waited with a half-contracted brow for an answer; which, from my looks, he guessed would not be what he wish'd. I gasp'd for breath; a deep sigh relieved my swelling bosom. 'Twas no time to dissemble, to give false hopes would only protract my persecution. I collected all my courage, (love banish'd my native timidity) and with a respectful yet resolute air, reply'd, Pardon me, sir, for I foresee I shall offend; but your daughter has not been taught to dissemble: pardon me, I again repeat, when I tell you that I never can, that I never will |

accept

accept of the honour intended me by lord W—. You never can, you never will ! (sternly interrupted my father) heavens ! can I believe my senses ? is it in that decisive tone, is it with that determinate air, that the once submissive Jessy dares to answer her parent ? Go, reflect a little ; I pardon this your first offence : but I expect, when we meet again, that you will have taught yourself to practice the duty you owe me, and also render'd yourself sensible of what is for your true happiness. So saying, he left me. Reflect ! On what can I reflect Terresa ? on the storm that is gathering, that will burst upon me, and from which I see no possibility of an escape, without being guilty of a step, the imprudence of which will im-bitter all my future days. Ah ! is it not better to be wretched from having acted up to my duty, than to be equally so by violating it ? No doubt. But then,

Orlando !

Orlando ! yet he owns he dare not publicly make me his wife, or the loss of his father's favour must follow, and ruin, as to his fortune, be the consequence.

'Twas for this reason he so long concealed his passion ; a passion which he would to the last have struggled to conceal, had not the prospect of seeing me bestow myself on another driven him to despair, and put him off his guard. Now he does not presume to advise, he laments his fate ; he sighs, he looks pale, he is, I see, endeavouring to sacrifice his love to my welfare, to what the world esteems my interest. Generous man ! such a disinterested conduct will prevail more, ah ! I fear were he to urge me, I should not be able to refuse him any thing consistent with my honour. Heaven protect and guard me from myself.

Adieu ! yours,

J. L.

L E T.

## LETTER XXXIII.

MISS LIVINGSTON to Miss SANDYS  
at PARIS.

**T**ERRESA, my dear Terresa, this is perhaps the last time that I shall have courage to address you with the familiarity of a friend. They drive me to desperation. They will force me to act in such a manner, that I shall no longer dare to hope for your esteem.

Yesterday morning my father sent for me into his apartment, and with a stern air said to me, You have justly forfeited my tenderness, and to the highest degree exasperated me by your obstinacy ; an obstinacy for which I can now but too well account. Unfortunate, infatuated girl ! forgetting both your duty to heaven and me, you have dared to bestow your affections on a Heretick,  
and



and a rebel. But know that, fondly as I once loved you, I would sooner follow you to your grave, than suffer the anguish of beholding so wicked, so hateful an union. To prevent which, hear what I have fixedly, and unalterably resolved, either that you shall to-morrow-morning (for I will not risque the danger of unnecessary delay) give your hand to lord W—, or else prepare to set off for France, to which place I will instantly conduct you, and in a convent (whether you take the vows or not) will shut you up for life. This is my unalterable resolution, so take your measures accordingly ; only one night have you to reflect, and to come to a resolution.

He left me! this now cruel father of mine left me, more dead than alive. What shall I do, Terresa ? Flight ? ah ! with whom can I fly, and who will protect

tect me, unknowing and unknown?  
 Marry lord W—! I would sooner die.  
 A convent! too well do I know the  
 wretchedness of that hopeless state. O!  
 'tis, if possible, worse than the former.  
 But how avoid it? my father, ever in-  
 flexible when once he has fixed on any  
 thing, aided by superstitious priests,  
 who will think they do a meritorious  
 action, were they even to drag me to  
 the altar, and to hold me there while  
 they pronounced the marriage rites;  
 still more meritorious will they deem  
 it, to condemn me to a convent. I am  
 absolutely in despair. Ah! here comes  
 Orlando. What a critical, what a dan-  
 gerous time has he chosen for an in-  
 terview? O! Terresa, pity me if I  
 should be tempted to forget those pru-  
 dent precepts, which with you I was  
 taught.—He is here. Adieu!

J. L.

L. E. T.

## L E T T E R XXXIV.

Mrs. CRAVEN to Miss PEMBROKE, at  
SUDLEY.

Craven-Hall.

**L**AST night, for it was late when they arrived, Mr. Craven introduced to me a gentleman and lady, the former of whom he said was his favourite, and most particular friend. I received him as such, nor did I pay less attention, and civility to his fair companion, who seemed exceedingly dejected and fatigued, but in spite of both, uncommonly handsome. A very striking figure, and a face perfectly lovely though pale; her complexion clear as the light, yet visibly impaired by grief and anxiety. As to the gentleman, I never in my life beheld a form so elegantly, so gracefully majestic: the  
air

air of his countenance is equally noble, with great expression, and vivacity in his fine black eyes. The young lady testified her gratitude for my polite attention, rather by her looks than words. She seemed indeed too languid, and too much dispirited to be able to enter into conversation; and as soon as the cloth was removed, begg'd leave to retire to her apartment. I accompanied her to the door of it, but guessed that she would then very willingly dispense with my farther attendance. I instantly went to my own room, supposing that Mr. Craven and his friend, who I found had been some months absent from each other, would be glad to have a little private chat. When he came to bed, I expressed my admiration of his guests, but added, that I was concerned to see such visible traces of sorrow on the lady's countenance. 'Tis easily accounted for, (returned he) she has just stole a private marriage



marriage with my friend, and such is their situation, that it may be many years ere he is at liberty publickly to acknowledge her as his wife. They have assumed a fictitious name, and propose for some weeks to enjoy each other's company in a retreat, which, by their orders, I have given directions to be prepared for their reception in our neighbourhood: they will however, during our stay in the country, be frequently our guests; and when we go to town in winter, as they must there be still more cautious, my friend has proposed to me, if agreeable to you, that his lady should wholly reside with us, as a relation of yours, 'till their affairs take a more favourable turn. Mr. Warrender, (continued he) is his real name, but he has taken that of Belmont: he is infinitely charm'd with my Marriana, and hopes you will find his wife worthy of your friendship. She is a native of Scotland;

Scotland ; and, being an entire stranger in England, stands in great need of such a friend to support her spirits, and reconcile her to herself, after taking a step, which her prudence highly condemns. Well may she condemn herself, my Nancy, for too often are such acts of disobedience followed by the most fatal consequences : but though she may see her error in the clearest light, let us in charity draw a veil over the faults of a youthful heart, govern'd by a passion which is too little under the influence of reason.

The amiable Sir William, his sister, and lady Susan, left us last Wednesday. Would you believe it, Nancy ? I was not sorry when they put an end to their visit, highly as I esteem them : I felt awkward, and diffident of myself ; yet, if I know my heart, it is now wholly freed from its weakness ; disappointed in its  
first

first attachment, 'tis cold and insensible ; never more will the flame of love be re-kindled ; from the first, it burnt with a temperate heat, fortunately no delusive hopes fed the flame, so that I found it no very difficult task to get it wholly extinguished. I still saw in my much esteemed guardian graces and attractions, which I have not yet been able to discover in any other of his sex ; a superior good sense, a benevolence, a gentleness of manner, and a rectitude of conduct, that exalts him above his fellow.

Heaven ! how had such an insignificant (to say no worse of her) as lady Jones the presumption, to aspire to such a man ! Since my marriage, it seems she came to an explanation with him ; and made no scruple to tender him the offer of her person and fortune. The scene, as lady Susan described it, was  
 comic

comic to the highest degree : but I have not time at present ; Mrs. Belmont (as I must call her) is in the breakfast-parlour : 'tis near ten o'Clock. Adieu !

M. CRAVEN.

END of the First VOLUME.

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